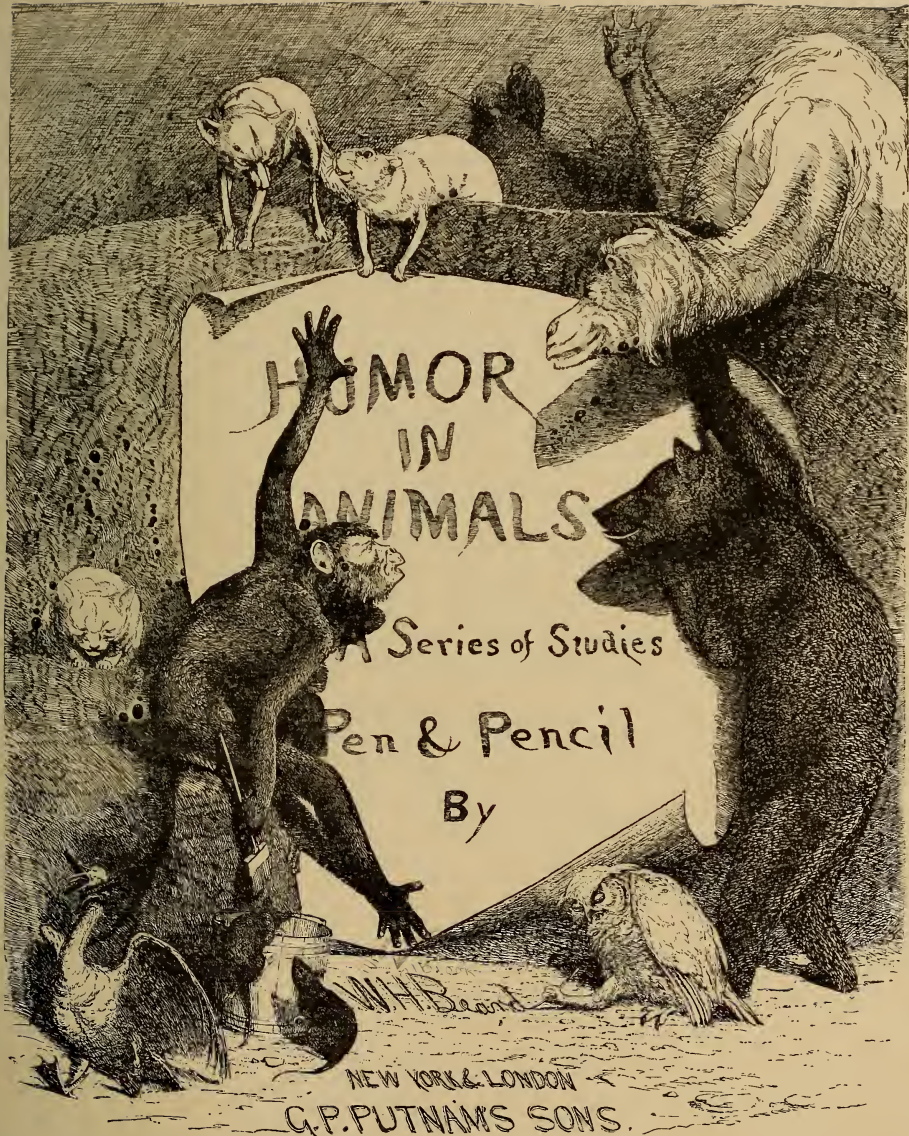






HUMOR IN ANIMALS





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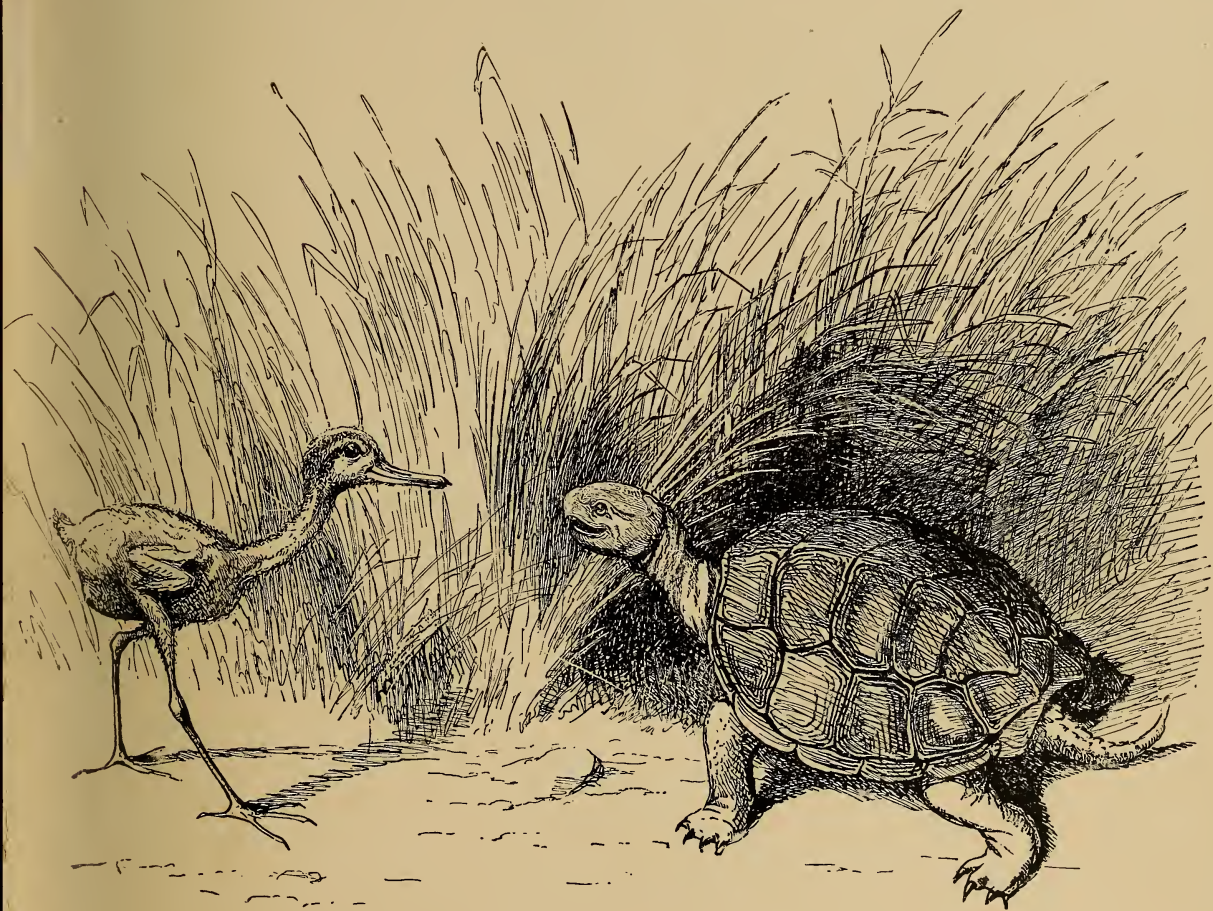
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INTRODUCTION.



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HUMOR IN ANIMALS.

WHILE I shall attempt to make my treatment of this subject conform to my title, yet I will not promise to keep strictly to it. Other elements, seemingly foreign, must come in for its better elucidation, and these will give their supporting evidence, while I trust that they will be found no less interesting than the main subject.

The manner of expression of the inferior animals is so obscure and so entirely different from that of man, that we can only know their real feelings by the closest study. They are the victims of our ignorance. Even the domestic animals, so constantly associated with mankind, suffer continually from misunderstandings of their intentions and motives, as well as from ignorance of their ways of thought and manner of looking at things. It is not a new theory that all human qualities are parcelled out among the lower animals, each one sharing with man such traits as his needs require, and no more. If this were true, and were all the truth, there are no exclusively human traits, but only animal,—man being the epitome of the whole. This may be entirely true of the well-defined characteristics, but certain sentiments and *sub*-attributes, so to speak, based upon those possessed by all, are bestowed upon man alone; and of these no lower creature can have any conception. They lift him far above all other animals that we know.

Humor in Animals.

Beyond the most obvious impulses, we have no means of determining the motive for any act of animals except by the closest and most careful study of individuals. Only by long-continued intimacy with one member of a species can we form a base upon which to build a theory or arrive at a just estimate of their peculiar characters. How many human individuals, with all their likeness of habits and of expression, are past finding out! We are often astonished to discover traits in our most intimate friends and acquaintances that we never suspected until they were developed by some unusual occasion. How much harder is it to ascertain the true feelings of those creatures whose language we have hardly begun to know? We can arrive with certainty at only a few conclusions, and those, as I have said, only by the closest observation.

All animals are now held by science to be more or less similar in kind; and it is therefore not impossible that every living creature has, dormant or active, the quality of humor. It is, to be sure, difficult for vivacious man to conceive of a staid matter-of-fact old turtle having any fun in him. And yet, in his solemn way, he may have considerable mild enjoyment of that sort, though he never expresses it by mirth, or even by a smile. This is not his way. What might tickle his sluggish sense of drollery would not, probably, seem so funny to ourselves. No more can we comprehend where he finds his domestic felicity in his slimy home, though this is undoubtedly "as clear as mud" to him. Certainly life must have its strong attractions, even for a turtle. And as he clings to it with great tenacity for an indefinite length of time, it is not improbable that a little dull fun mingles in now and then to season it withal.



“BONE,” THE OWL.

THE grave and philosophical owl would hardly be more readily suspected of descending to jocularly than the tortoise. But I once possessed, for several years, an interesting specimen of the barred or gray owl; and, as I gave him careful study, I am able to write confidently of his ability to stoop from his dignity, and even to indulge in ludicrous frolics at times. These partook so much of the whimsical as seemingly to carry them beyond mere playfulness. At all events, my owl's grotesque performances answered every purpose of humor, and were the cause of much enjoyment and merry comment in the village, where they rendered him quite famous. Whether intentional or not, “Bone”—that was his name—was clearly recognized as a great wag.

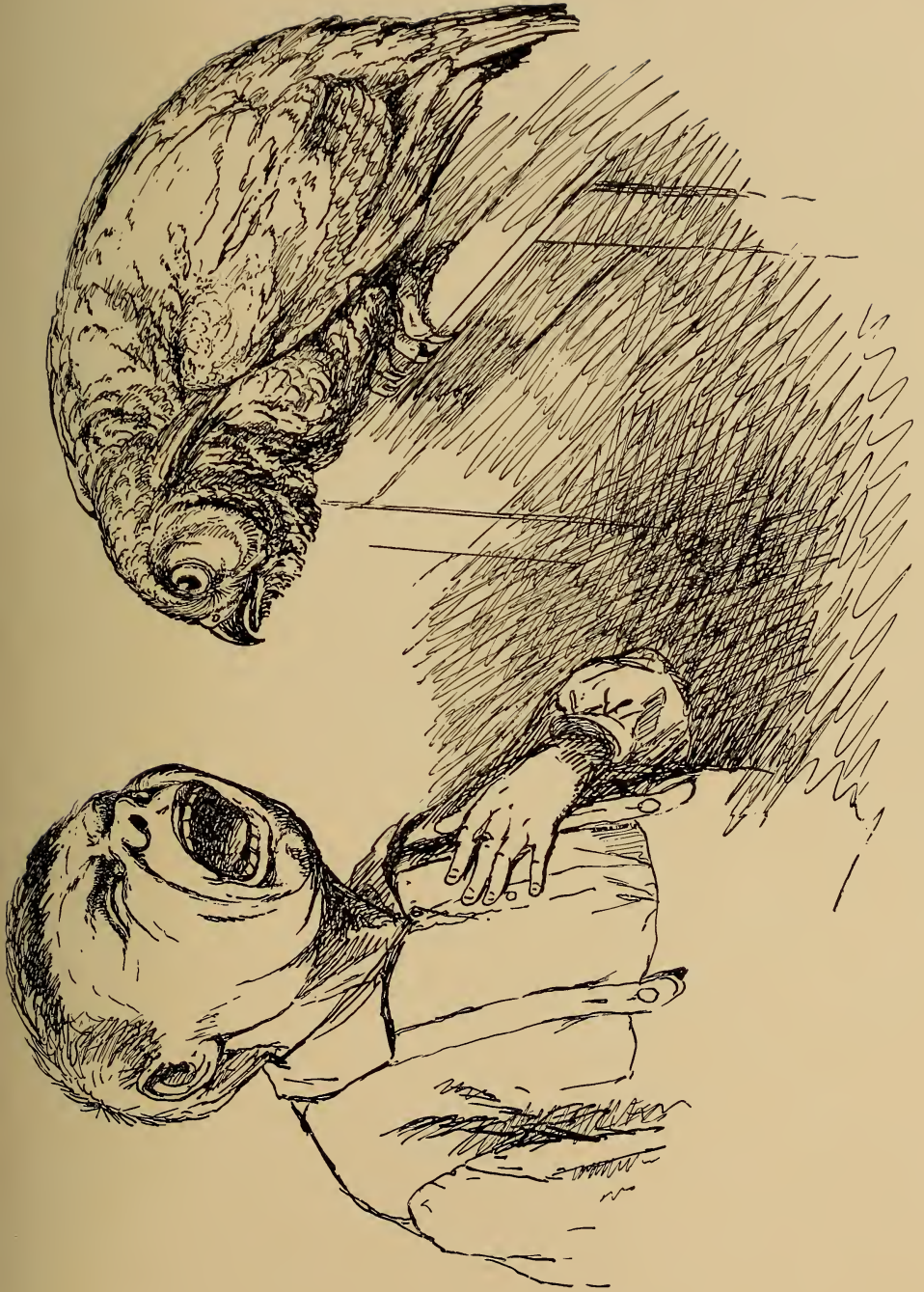
He was very fond of playing in the water at times. Often he would repair to the middle walk of the garden, where a pool of water, fourteen inches deep or more, would stand for some time after a heavy shower. Here Bone's aquatic performances were eagerly watched, the more so because they were always diversified by something new, according to the circumstances. Upon one occasion, I remember, a little box, a foot or so square, that had contained flower-roots, had been carelessly left in the path; it was bottom up, and half the bottom was gone. The box was but little deeper than the water, which brought its edge and the remaining piece of the bottom near the surface. This box Bone regarded

Humor in Animals.

with much interest, and after many quaint antics around it he finally gave it his entire attention. Leaping upon the remaining half of the bottom, he gazed with great earnestness into the depths of the open space, then turning, he bestowed upon the lookers-on an irresistible stare that caused much laughter. At this he seemed to take umbrage, and replied by a vigorous snapping of his beak in a threatening manner. Still he did not consider the affront to his dignity as of sufficient importance to turn him from his purpose. Looking again into the open half of the box, he jumped up over the uncovered place, holding his great round head high up, and then plumped down feet first into the box, which forced his head back and tail forward until they nearly met; these were then all that could be seen of Bone above the edge of the box. Naturally my gray owl cut a most absurd figure in this situation, and he seemed to know and enjoy it, for there he remained, turning his head in all directions, often bestowing upon the by-standers that same solemn gaze as before; but now he did not seem to take offence at the consequent laughter.

Bone was constantly doing queer and unexpected things, the motives of which were more easily explained by attributing them to a sense of waggery than to any thing else.

One afternoon in early autumn I was standing in the front yard near the fence upon which the owl was sitting, when a boy of the village came down the street looking very anxious and solemn. He marched straight up to the fence, not seeming to notice the bird, who was usually a great favorite with him, and exclaimed: "Say! I've got the canker-rash; do you know any thing about it?" (The canker-rash was a much-dreaded disease of the mouth, often fatal among children.) At the same time he opened to the fullest extent a mouth that was capacious enough to harbor any



"BONES' " INVESTIGATION OF THE MOUTH.

amount of fatal disease, and closing his eyes, waited my inspection. The owl seeing this enormous cavity yawning before him, stood down and peered into it in the most earnest and scientific manner. My boisterous mirth so grated upon the poor boy's feelings, wrought up as they were by his fears, that he cried with vexation and threatened to "kill the darned bird!" I was soon able to pacify him, however, for upon inquiry I found he had been out in the field eating green hazel-nuts, which, as personal experience had taught me, would often produce that result. The revulsion of feeling from alarm to confidence restored his good humor, and his ample mouth was brought into requisition for the most extensive grins of pleasure.





THE CRANE.

IN all respects save one the crane is the very antipodes of the owl. In form and habits they are unlike; but each bird is mysterious and secluded. The solitary owl acts from his own undivulged motives and keeps his own counsel. The gregarious crane also holds aloof from the world, and conducts himself with entire independence of its modes, wishes, or opinions. Each, however, holds his share of animal characteristics according to his requirements, and this one of humor, I am convinced, from observation, is a well-defined attribute in the composition of both. In the case of the owl I have given above such evidence as I could put in words. I know that it may seem insufficient to the reader who has never had the opportunity of watching, analyzing, and comparing each little act and peculiarity with the whole, rounded character of the owl, and from this arriving at his conclusions. But the dance of the cranes, as often witnessed by travellers upon the vast Western plains, performed by hundreds of individuals, each exerting his utmost powers to surpass all others in extravagance of action, is more reasonably explained as being a grand general frolic of these strange birds than by attributing it to any other tribal motive. In a dance pure and simple the element of humor does not necessarily enter. But dances, like every thing else, may be employed for the outward expression of various sentiments. The pleasure afforded by the



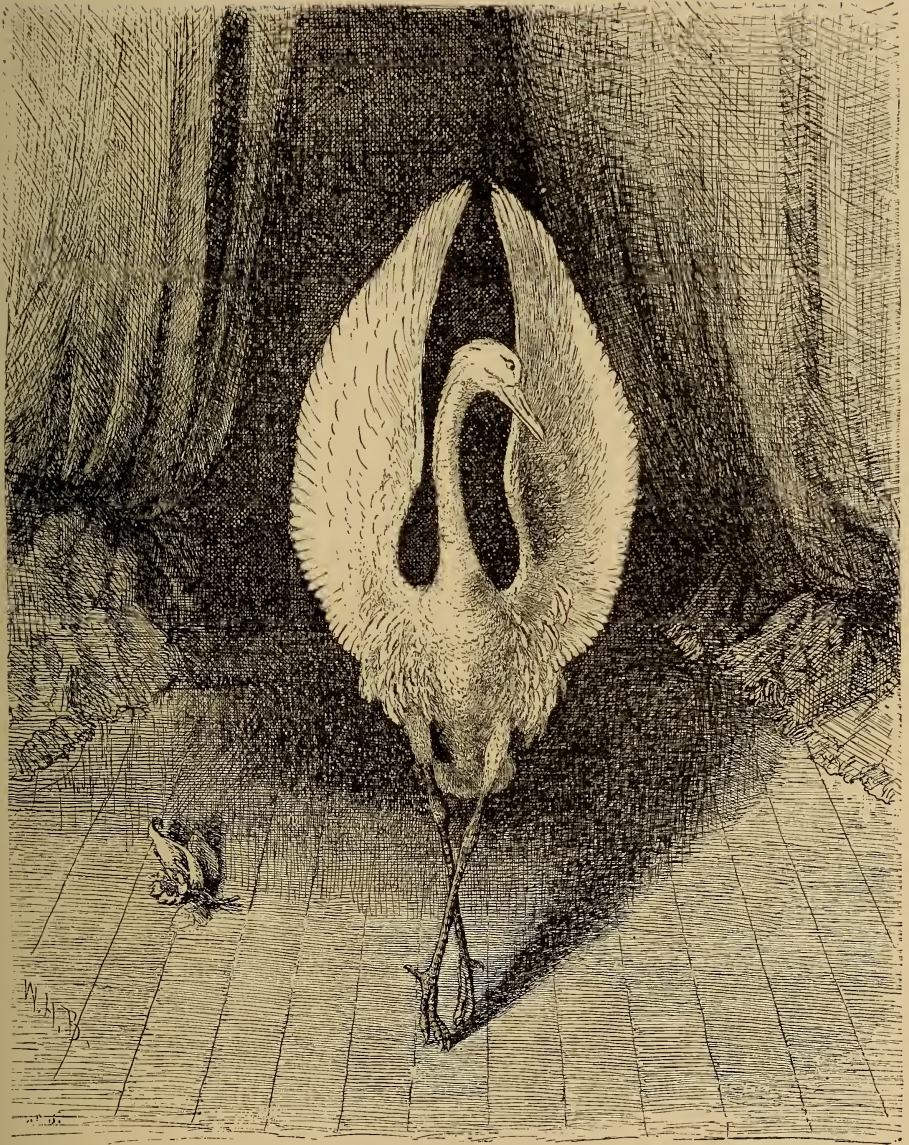
THE DANCE OF THE CRANES.



THE POETRY OF MOTION.

W.H.B.

"poetry of motion," for instance, it is claimed, forms the chief incentive for the dances of which the young of the human species are so fond. Indians engage in a frantic war dance before going forth to do battle. The "Shakers" have a religious dance which to them is solemn and full of meaning, though to the unregenerate outside world it seems irresistibly funny. But certainly no one would ascribe a religious meaning to this dance of the cranes. It is not at all like a ballet dance, nor would it be more reasonable to call it a war dance in imitation of their wild human neighbors, since no fighting follows it. Had their ancient foes, the dwarfs, emigrated to this continent and colonized on the prairies, it might be a reasonable conjecture that the birds were preparing to renew the old warfare that Ovid celebrates, and that this was a prelude to one of those fierce, picturesque battles; but as the dwarfs are not visibly there, nor foe of any sort save man, and as every feature of the dance seems to justify the conclusion, we are forced to the conviction that it is the season of fun and frolic with these fowls. It is the crane carnival, the festival where grotesqueness rules the scene; and that feeling is accompanied by a sense of the humorous akin to it—in short, a part of it. One of these performances in progress is a strange and most interesting sight. Each bird seems to use his utmost ingenuity to get himself into absurd positions and go through the most fantastic movements, thrusting the head close along the ground and hopping upon one foot with one wing to support it, he raises the other wing and leg high in air. Then, in a moment, he changes to an upright position, with the head at its utmost height; both wings sweep the full extent of their half circle, touching at each extreme, and carrying the bird along by a succession of uncouth leaps. This evolution suddenly changes again to a crouching run, with the great wings

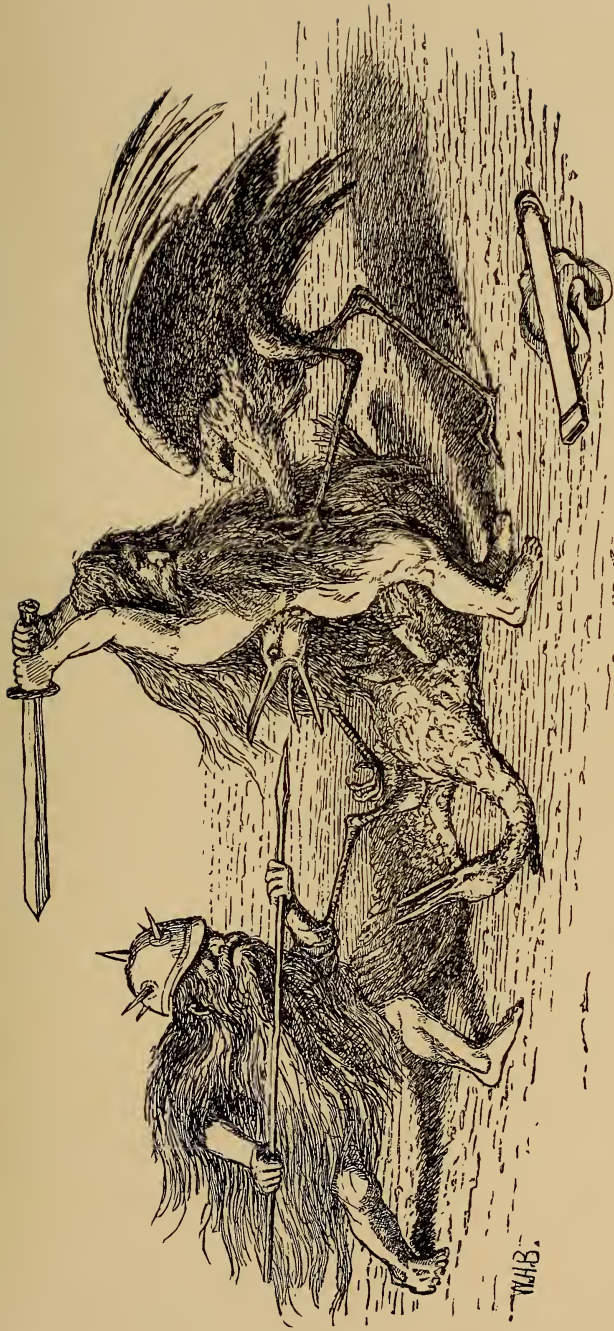


THE BAILLET DANCER.

Humor in Animals.

hovering close to the ground, as if in pursuit of a fast-fleeing serpent; and so on through many fanciful evolutions for each one of the hundreds of birds. There is in all this evidently a purpose, and that purpose can be no other than the enjoyment, by each performer, of the absurd contest, in which every bird, uncouth at best, does his uttermost to look ridiculous. The enjoyment of the ridiculous is the sense of humor.





BATTLE, BETWEEN THE DWARFS AND THE CRANES.



CROWS.

THE crows or ravens have undoubtedly a large share of the trait of humor. It would be expected that these sagacious birds would afford a rich yield of anecdote to prove their claim, beyond all other fowls, except the parrot family. The truth is, however, that there is less positive or direct evidence of humor in their character than in that of the other birds of which we have spoken ; unless, indeed, we regard the love of mischief as a proof of humor. In that case there is abundant testimony. It is difficult to account satisfactorily for the creature's irrepressible instinct to steal and hide away shining things. This may be, however, a distant family trait, a reflex of the miser element, that is so prevalent in the human family. And, after all, the great difference between the niggard man and the crow, seems to be the bird's inability to distinguish between the precious and baser metals. He takes "all that glitters" for gold, which lessens the labor of hoarding considerably, and answers the same purpose to him as to the miser. The raven's covetousness, however, is not confined to shining objects. Things attractive from color or light and airy texture, also excite his cupidity.

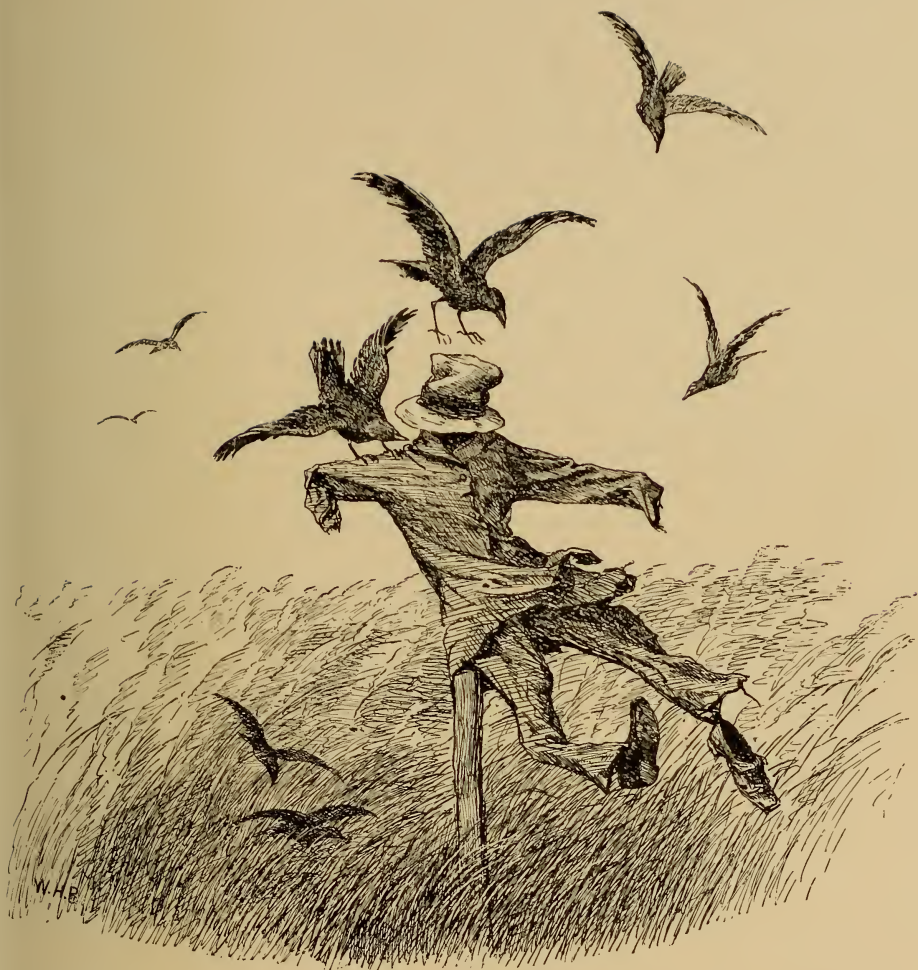
In a village where I lived many years ago, a crow named Jim, owned by a citizen, had the freedom of the town, although he was a great pest and threats against his life were constant. Notwithstanding this he was, upon the whole, a general favorite, and every



THE PROBABLE FATE OF THE CAP.

house seemed to be regarded by him as his home. One beautiful Sabbath morning, an old lady stood before her glass arranging her hair with most scrupulous care before putting on her new cap ; it had come home the night before, and hung upon a chair near the open window. As she was inserting the last hair-pin a rushing sound startled her. Looking around she saw Jim, his ebon coat shining in the sun with alternate green, purple, and gold. " Why Jim, you beauty ! " exclaimed the kindly old soul, admiringly, " is that you ? " Jim answered not a word, but, glancing about, he cast his eye upon that cap. One dash, and the next moment saw him, as also did several early church-goers, sailing over the town with the new cap streaming against the sky, and all its bright ribbons fluttering behind ! It was the last of the cap, within mortal ken ; and I may add that the old lady was moved by the incident to change her mind about attending church that morning.

An old gentleman who had retired from business, amused himself by raising choice fruits, and took pride and pleasure in sending to his friends and neighbors, baskets full of the finest in their season. But, on account of the birds, and particularly on account of Jim, he had a world of trouble with his cherries. He could, to be sure, set the boys to shoot the woodpeckers, and even the robins, and cherry-birds, but to remove Jim, who had taken it into his head to meddle with his ox-hearts, was out of the question. What was the more aggravating was that Jim's ravages were so wanton. Had he only stopped the work of destruction when he had enough, there would have been a limit ; but in his idleness he wasted indefinite quantities of fruit, simply to gratify the pleasure he found in seeing them fall from the housetop to the ground. After watching a cherry until it struck the earth, he took no further interest in that experiment, but returned to the tree to make another. Picking another



THE SCARE-CROW.

cherry, he would bring it back to the ridge of the house, always alighting a few feet back. Then, marching to the gable, he would let the cherry drop, at the same time turning his head, to watch its descent with one eye—after the manner of all fowls. This pastime he would keep up for hours together, to the great annoyance of the old gentleman, but, it must be confessed, to the delight of the villagers generally. It is quite probable that the amusement of these idlers formed a part of the inducement for Jim to continue the mischief. He began it solely for his own entertainment, finding his diversion in watching the fruit in its fall, and seeing it diminish as it receded. It was probably an interesting mystery to his unscientific mind. But, being encouraged by the crowd of lookers-on, he took many more of the old man's cherries than he would have taken for his own entertainment alone. In all this, there was something nearly allied to the element of humor.

It is only in the few instances where nothing else will explain the act, that we are able to say positively that this attribute is not confined to the human family. But these few cases are enough to make it certain that humor is often felt and indulged in ways outside of our conception, and by animals that we may never have suspected to possess it. Where fowl or brute is so constantly addicted to mischief, for mischief's sake, it can hardly be that humor does not enter into their performances. And it seems strange that many of the most intelligent creatures that are most likely to possess this quality in a large degree, are so ambiguous in all that they do, as to show no certain trace of this one element in any act. The raven family are so full of most astonishing cunning and sagacity, wild or tame, and in a domestic state so constantly prone to mischief, it seems to me they must be possessed of humor as well, yet I am unable to point to a single instance to

positively prove it. They soon learn that which is of any advantage for them. How well they know the use the farmer has for a gun! How well they distinguish its form from that of a hoe, rake, crowbar, or any like implement that he carries! The crow studies out all man's devices for entrapping or frightening him. It requires but a short acquaintance to render the "*scare-crow*" a misnomer, and he is quite shrewd enough to understand why the stuffed image is placed in the field. And I may add here that it is well he is able to protect himself against these indiscreet efforts to exterminate him. Notwithstanding his forays upon planted fields, the protection that he gives to the crops far exceeds his encroachments upon them. The farmer could better afford to sow a double, yes, a quadruple quantity of seed, than dispense with his services as a worm- and insect-destroyer.





SWALLOWS' JOKES.

AN incident which I have just heard from a most reliable source, seems to me—though not furnishing conclusive evidence—a fair proof that swallows are also possessed of humor. No one who has watched these sprightly creatures in their flight, now skimming close to the surface of the still lake, their reflected forms seeming to double their numbers, now mounting high over the tree tops and houses, darting here and there and making the calm sky lively with their airy gambols, can doubt the joyousness of their existence. Nor can the careful observer of general nature have failed to observe that the exhilaration of such buoyant pleasures develops a spirit of mischief, and, as I have before said, this spirit is but another phase or form of humor. But to my story. My friend, who is the principal of a military academy, told me that when he took possession of his present flourishing institution and brought his family to the establishment, it had been some time deserted, having run down entirely under the preceding administration. The rambling old building was uninhabited, save by a colony of chimney swallows who had their numerous nests in the ample old-fashioned chimney, and were sporting in vast numbers in the great kitchen, which they entered from the fireplace, as well as through a window that had been left open. He had brought with him a corps of servants ready to put the place in order at once, and to prepare it for occupancy. Among these servants was an Irish



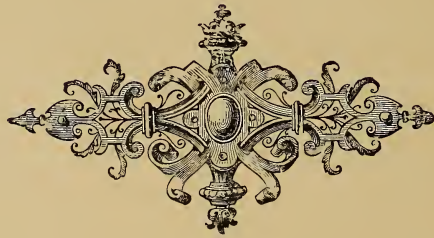
THE SWALLOWS' JOKE.

cook, as massive as became her occupation, and excitable, superstitious, and exuberant as became her nationality. Immediately upon arriving, this sturdy cook waddled down the stairs to inspect the kitchen ; upon thrusting open the cobwebby door she found herself an intruder upon her own precincts, as it were. She was overwhelmed at the presence of so much company ; as she herself expressed it, she *stood spachless* ! The birds also were thrown into great perturbation by the unwonted visitation, darting wildly about the room, and making a perfect din of twitter. The master, who happened to be where he could look through a side window, was an interested witness, and described the scene to me. As the cook did not move from the spot where she stood, the little creatures began to regain confidence, and seemed to regard her more with curiosity than fear, and grew continually bolder as they saw no effort to restrain them. Those outside, to be sure, would for a time approach the window, then lose courage, wheel, circle around the air, come again and again, until they mustered courage to go in and investigate the bulky figure of the cook with their fellows, darting across the room at first, up the chimney, and so on, around to the open window again, until the whole colony became a living band circling around through the kitchen by way of window and chimney. All this time the cook stood in dazed wonder ! Still the little birds, growing all the while more impudent, flew past her a black, fluttering mass, and now began to make little détours towards her, which all the time came nearer and nearer as each swallow vied with his leader in bravado, until they fairly flapped their saucy wings in her very face, and really seemed to greatly enjoy her consternation ! But an Irish tongue cannot long remain "*spachless*," and cook, indignant at the impudence of the "*little bastes*," broke out with all the choice invectives the nimble Celtic

brain can conceive under the incentive of extraordinary provocation. She began to strike at the creatures with both of her plump red hands. To dodge around them gave new poignancy to the swallows' sport, and they indulged in it with such zest and vigor that the cook was forced to seek refuge in flight. She labored up the stairs again where she presented herself before her mistress, breathless as well as "spachless." Soon regaining her breath, however, speech followed presently. She entertained the lady for half an hour with a most instructive medley of wit, wisdom, nonsense, drollery, and superstition, until breath and "spach" gave out again. The swallows and Mrs. Cook afterwards became good friends, though the birds were banished from the kitchen.

My informant was convinced from what he saw, that after recovering their confidence, those birds were well aware of the effect of their impudent assault upon the cook, and delighted at it. Had he needed further support for this conviction, the birds again furnished it by subsequently attempting the same trick upon himself and wife. As the two were seated upon the front porch one afternoon, they observed the swallows circling nearer and nearer to where they sat; and, remembering the experience of the cook, suspected what was premeditated. The hall ran through the house, and both doors were open, so that it was evident the birds had seen the light, and contemplated another wild chase through the hall, to end up probably with attentions to themselves. Already now and then one darted under the roof of the porch over their heads, then flew far away into upper air, as if to recover breath after the daring exploit. If there had been any doubt of their design, it was revealed when one brave fellow boldly entered the hall door. He was scarcely in, however, before he lost heart, wheeled and out again with a cry of alarm as

if really pursued, and sailed swiftly away from danger and temptation. His example was soon followed by others, however, until several entered boldly. But in the darkness of the hall the nervous leader lost his head, and consequently his way, getting into the parlor, the door of which was also open, and there into a hopeless muddle. Of course, his followers did not arrive at the point of paying their attentions to the lady and gentleman. Their projected frolic was a failure; and they were only too glad to use the ways of escape—the parlor windows that were kindly opened to them.





THE PARROT FAMILY.

WE now come to a family of birds whose actions are so clear as to render mistake as to their character impossible. There can no be misunderstanding the motives for many, at least, of the acts and antics of parrots. This numerous family of birds, unique in their form and general construction, quaint in every motion, and comical in expression, forms an inexhaustible theme and study. In many respects parrots are distinct from all others of the feathered tribe. As minutely observing as are the ravens, parrots are also marvellously imitative, especially of the sound and tones of voice, etc. It is doubtful whether they have any conception of the import of the words they are taught to utter, but as they are seldom, if ever, inapt in the use of their limited vocabulary, we must conclude that they have something of that partial understanding that children have—that of associating sounds with incidents and things. When an occasion arises where an expression they have learned would be appropriate they are pretty sure to volunteer a remark including it ; and always, seemingly, with more or less waggish or mischievous intent. My friend is the owner of a parrot who is an extraordinary talker. There is never a knock at the door that he does not cry out, “Come in !” When the guest enters, he says, “Good-morning,” without much reference to the time of day however, and this he follows up with the inquiry : “Just come in ; what ’s the news ?”

Among other things, he has been taught to spell dog, and confirm the correctness of his spelling as follows: "d-o-g dog, bow-wow, that 's right!" One day his master heard him repeating his exercise with the "o" left out—thus: "d-g dog, bow-wow, that 's right!" and repeating it so often and watching his master so close, my friend had no doubt it was done for the purpose of provoking correction. So turning to the bird, he said: "No, Poll; that is not right, d-o-g dog, that is right," "d-g dog, bow-wow, that 's right!" returned the parrot. After correcting him several times with the same result, the bird replied, perhaps betraying a little irritation in his voice: "Well, it 's no matter!" and dropped the subject.

The attribute of humor is undoubtedly found among every species of parrots. It would be difficult to say, however, which particular species is endowed with the greater share. Its expression in some is vague and obscure, while in others it is so much within the scope of human understanding, that the meaning of almost every act is obvious. A gentleman had a seemingly ungifted parrot. He never developed any particular sense until, one day, he was given a piece of meat which the cat coveted and climbed up to the cage to purloin. The bird offered no resistance, but on the contrary fluttered about the top of the cage in great perturbation and tremor, until in her efforts the cat turned in such a manner that the tail fell between the bars of the cage. The parrot, seeing this, seemed to forget his fear, dropped instantly to the bottom of the cage, caught the obtruding tail in his strong beak, and gave it such a vigorous pinch as sent the cat squalling to the floor. Immediately the bird set up a ha! ha! in splendid imitation of his master's laugh, which he was never before known to attempt. Nor did he ever try it again, for the cat never gave him



THE CAT AND THE PARROT.

another occasion. This case has a singular interest. The bird's recognition of the fitness of the occasion showed that he knew what laughter indicated.

A favorite parrot that had escaped from his cage was seen to fly into a small orchard. The alarmed family repaired immediately to the spot, taking the cage with them, but the bird was nowhere to be seen. For nearly two hours the party searched in vain among those few trees. He could be nowhere else; the orchard was so isolated, that he could not have left it and gone elsewhere without being observed. In the midst of this search, a neighbor's son, seeing that something unusual was going on, came through the yard, and upon approaching the orchard wall, his eye was attracted by a slight movement in a thick clump of foliage of a tree near the entrance. A closer scouting revealed the parrot; he saw the green head of the bird peering out at the searchers, and watching them with such absorbing interest that he had not seen or heard the lad, who was then able to observe his movements without his presence being known to the bird.

The boy was surprised at the evident intention of the bird to conceal himself, but whether from a spirit of mischief or with an ultimate view of escape, he could not determine, so watched his motions with much curiosity, and stood long enough to become satisfied that the parrot was really enjoying his pursuers' perplexity, as he took such an engrossing interest in their movements. When any one approached his hiding-place, he withdrew his head under cover of the leaves and remained perfectly quiet until the person turned again, when the rascal would crane his neck around to watch the receding form, seemingly with great delight. At length the lad, whose approach had not been observed by either party, called out: "Here he is!" Without waiting, the bird immediately

left his cover, stepped out upon the limb screaming, whether with delight or anger none could tell; it might have been the latter, however, as he stopped to call the boy a "little devil!" And when the searching party came up and his mistress chid him, he innocently asked: "What 's the matter?" There was no mistaking this creature's motives; the spirit of pure mischief kept him all that time quiet in his hiding-place, and entertained at the annoyance and anxiety he was able to inflict.

I remember a magnificent cockatoo that graced the door of a bird-fancier many years ago. Over one arm of his perch hung a number of wicker cages in which canary-birds were exposed for sale. It was the cockatoo's wont to creep under these, upon his perch, unseen by the little birds, and utter a scream that brought pedestrians to a stand-still for blocks. They turned and wondered what was the matter, but the splendid bird, only intent upon the little canaries, was indifferent to the effect of his screech upon the public. He would raise his head in front of the cages, with crest erected, to see if the birds were frightened, as they probably were; but being so closely confined, they had nothing to do but sit still and stare back at him. Nothing daunted, however, he tried it again and again. This was, of course, meant for a joke on the canaries.

Going into a bird-fancier's shop not long since, my attention was turned to a beautiful specimen of the scarlet macaw, who sat on a perch in the middle of the room in regal splendor, monarch of the place. No sooner did he see that I noticed him, than he presented his right claw, waving it up and down, and said: "How d' ye do?" Prudence, however, getting the better of politeness with me, I ignored the civility and went on admiring him in such phrase as should have excited a feeling of gratitude, if he had happened to have such a sentiment about him. Gratitude was evi-

dently dormant in his make-up. He thrust his claw still farther toward me, and repeated in a still higher key: "How d' ye do?" while the shopman stood by smiling. I still paid no attention, however, when the man said: "He wants to shake hands with you." "Yes, I know," said I; "and I *don't* think that's *all* he wants! Would he not bite my finger?" "Well, he *might* pinch it a little," said he, laughing outright. The macaw immediately uttered a cackling sound which passed for a laugh, and I joined in too. So we three enjoyed a hearty laugh at nobody's expense, like three jolly fellows of one race. It seemed to please the creature as much as though he had succeeded in his rascally trick. What prompted the bird?

A plethoric butcher, who ate too much of his own beef and took too little exercise, kept in his shop a very intelligent parrot. One day the master fell dead in his stall. Poll saw it but said nothing. Not knowing what to say, most sensibly he kept his mouth closed, but the curious bird became an attentive observer of the exciting scene that followed. The solemn silence of the neighboring marketmen, as they raised the body and placed it upon a bench and covered it with a cloth, speaking only when occasion required, and then in a subdued tone; the violent grief of the poor widow, the broken sobs of other friends, seemed to impress Poll that it was an occurrence too sacred for the curious gaze of the outside world, or, at least, one so extraordinary as to require a degree of privacy, and he cried out in an authoritative tone: "*Put up the shutters!*" This, though in itself a very sensible suggestion, coming from such a source, in such a tone, was rather shocking; and, not knowing what might follow, it was whispered to a near neighbor, that the bird had better be removed. While this person was going with the cage through a hall to a back room, the irrepressible

parrot still showed his interest in the occurrence by demanding "*What's all this row about?*" Would a child have been more apt? Could any one, indeed, have proposed any thing more fitting than the first remark?

A little daughter of a friend of mine has a very clever parrot, not only a great pet of hers, but also a favorite in the family. Naturally, the bird was not accustomed to neglect. One holiday the little girl had a number of her schoolmates visiting her, and for the time forgot her pet. As the children were playing in the room where Poll's cage was hanging, the bird called out: "Polly wants a cracker!" The little girls, being absorbed in their play, paid no attention to his demand. Seeing this, he repeated: "Polly wants a cracker!" Still no response; when he repeated it several times in quick succession, then watched the result; but this only elicited a merry laugh from the giddy children, which seemed to irritate Poll beyond endurance, and he cried in a high tone, but with measured distinctness: "*Pol-ly-wants-a-crack-crack-cracker!*" This brought the young company all to the cage, when the little mistress, seeing nothing there, exclaimed: "Sure enough, Poll *is* hungry." "Sure enough!" repeated Poll.

I might go on indefinitely, repeating the sayings and doings of these semi-human birds, or, if I may be allowed the comparison, these feathered monkeys, for they seem to take that position among birds. Among many anecdotes I have selected these few, and for all of the facts that I have not myself witnessed, I have good authority. Do they not prove my claim, that these creatures possess a sense of humor, and also seem to substantiate my theory, that the birds have about the same crude sense of the meaning of words as little children have, and, as far as they go, use them pretty much in the same manner?



DOMESTIC FOWLS.

I CAN make out nothing about the finer feelings of fowls. They express so little character outwardly, that whatever emotions they may have, beyond the commonest physical pleasures or pains, are known only to themselves. The peacock shows evident vanity ; the swan shows pride ; and the strutting turkey-gobbler *seems* to feel a sort of arrogant peevish pride, as if he knew how little he had to build upon, and was in constant fear of provoking contempt rather than respect. Yet his haughty manner may be no indication of such definite feelings. At all events, he is not accused of possessing the sense we are looking for, or, indeed, any other. An old goose is always the same—an old goose and nothing more. Nor do chickens show any wits upon which to found an argument. The most visionary theorist can claim little for them, beyond their usefulness to man.

The pigeon family, at least as we now know it, forms no exception to the rule of dulness. Still I may put in a sort of family claim for them through means of a creature who is a sojourner, at least (by classification), in the ancient House of Pigeons. The reader will please note the phraseology. Not in the pigeon-house or dove-cote ; by the *House of Pigeons* I mean their line, the large and respectable family of the Columbariæ.



THE CASE OF THE DODO.

THE average man draws his conclusions from certain premises that he is loath to give up. He refuses to accept a new idea or to look at a subject in another light, though he might thereby solve a question which he could never understand from his unyielding standpoint. In his superficial study of the lower animals, he asks few questions. His first inquiry is, What is the creature's utility? That means, of course, of what advantage is he to man? Has his pelt, flesh, bones, tallow, mind- or muscle-force any commercial value? If not, then why was he created? For what possible reason could the creature have been made? That the animal is happy, that life to him has charms which make it precious and constrain him to guard it as zealously as man does his own, is of no consequence. He cannot conceive that a creature less than man could have been created simply for himself, and to augment the sum of animal enjoyment. On the other hand, the learned man feels a little piqued that he has not been taken into the Creator's confidence, and entrusted with his secrets, and had explained to him the reasons for his mysterious acts, since he has taken such an ardent interest in his affairs. He feels that his rights have been withheld; he has pursued these studies so earnestly, searched so diligently, and found out so little! So, with lofty resentment, he ignores the Creator altogether, and even denies the existence of a Supreme Power, and attributes his works to the action of ever-



THE END OF THE DODO



THE DODO SEEKING A HOME WITH THE PIGEONS.

existing, self-adjusting laws, that act by force, not reason, and therefore can give no reason. The scientist pursues his studies without reference to an intelligent, great first cause, depending, when he can do no better, upon theory to supply all deficiencies, until something more substantial can be found. One of his most puzzling conundrums, both as to *whence* and *wherefore*, is the extinct bird called the dodo. To add to his perplexity, the creature went out of existence some three centuries ago, and thus circumscribed his opportunities of studying him. He has, nevertheless, been very diligent in his efforts to classify the bird. Beginning with the ostrich, he has carried him, as it were, down the whole line of feathered tribes, trying to fit him in *somewhere*, but seemed to find no suitable niche, and each family not only rejected this relationship, but brooded and sulked over the indignity, until, it is said, they finally rose in mass and pecked the poor nondescript off the face of the earth, and that is what became of the unfortunate dodo. The scientific man then prudently dropped the matter for the time, and waited a few centuries for the excitement to die out, when he quietly picked him up again and foisted him upon the pigeons—poor, helpless, unoffending doves!

Lyell says that Mr. Strickland agrees with Prof. Reinhardt, and calls the dodo a vulture-like, frugiverous pigeon! Now, that is a most discreet classification; it is one in which extremes meet.

There is a wide difference between the vulture and pigeon. Certainly as wide, generally, as the pigeon can conveniently make it! Wise Strickland! wise Reinhardt! A vulture-like fruit-eater! What could be more comprehensive? Of course, the compounding of such a vast amount of heterogeneous matter must result in something that could not be expected to resemble either vulture or pigeon in any one particular. That is why, probably, the two birds the least resembling were chosen to describe it.



THE DODO PLAYING THE ROLL OF HUMMING-BIRD.

The scientist has not much farther to go with him, however; he must stop when he has inflicted him upon the humming-birds. Think of him (the dodo, not the learned pundit) on agile wing, hovering about a honeysuckle! But even this difficulty of finding out where the uncouth bird belongs, is not the greatest that the scientific man has to contend with. When he existed, for what did he exist? That's the great question. Certainly he was not for beauty, nor for sweetness; his odor long survived him upon his native isle. Nor yet for grace,—oh, no! Nor could he have served for a carrier-pigeon; that must have been quite out of his line; if pigeon at all, he certainly was not of that branch of the family. He was not made for swiftness, like the ostrich, with whom he once claimed kinship. Nor yet for a musician; it is believed he could not have told "Yankee Doodle" from "Old Hundred," as ordinarily played, or a village band from a steam calliope. What, then, was the creature invented for? Undoubtedly, *just for fun!* Just look at him! But for whose fun? Why, his own, to be sure. No other creature ever had any fun out of him. Therefore, there was a great deal in him. The logic is conclusive; he must have been full of it. My position is proven. The little-wanted, much-abused dodo was a wag, who had all his fun to himself.

With the problematic dodo must end my chapter of birds. Few of them seem much available for my purpose; but could I get nearer to their inner life, I have no doubt that volumes might be written in proof of their claim to a sense of humor.

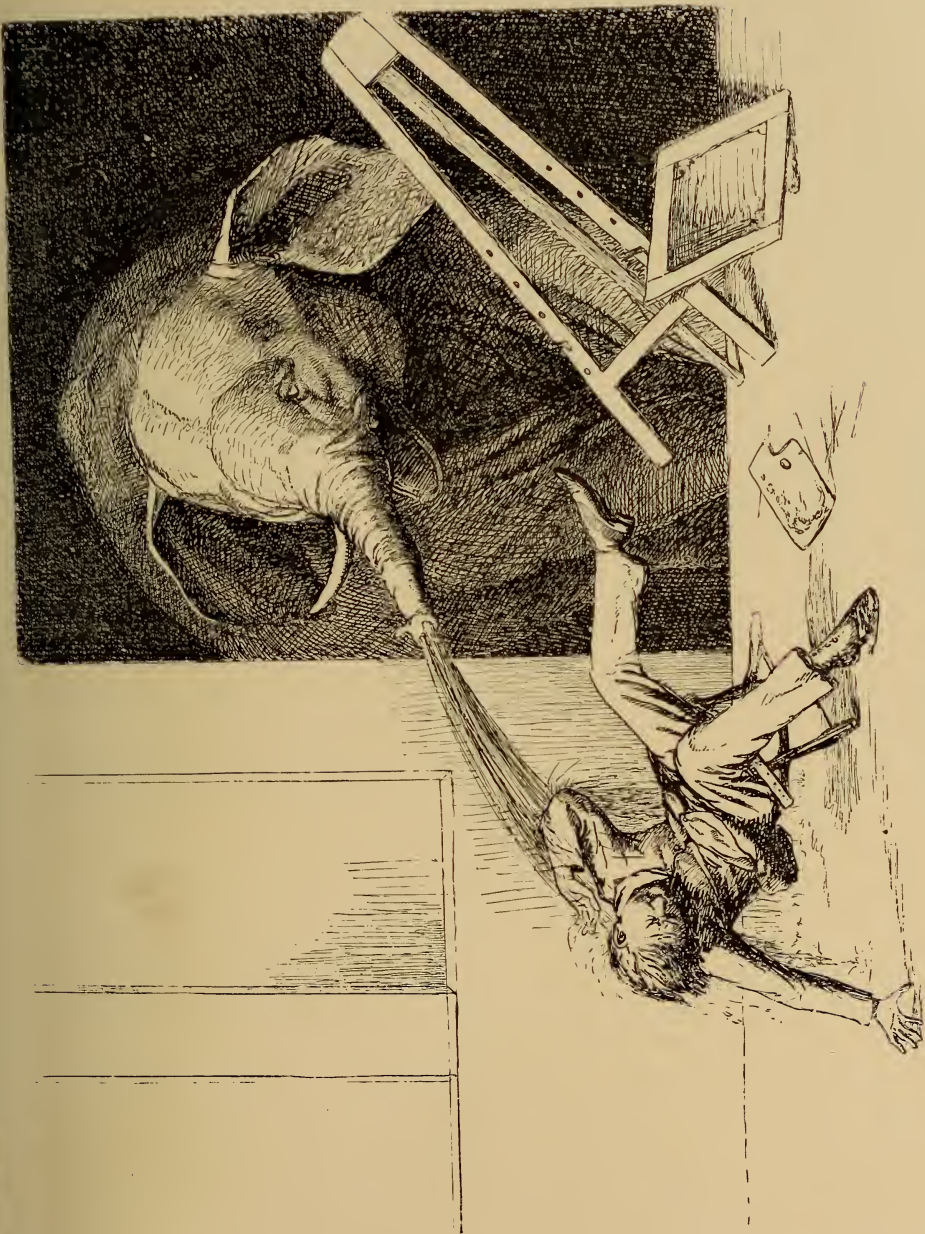


ELEPHANTINE JOKES.

THOUGH this is a great subject, I approach it with hesitation, feeling little confidence that I shall be able to handle it very lightly, or to extract much for my purpose from the great mass of material. I have no doubt, however, that if a shrewd observer, an earnest, interested student of nature, were constantly associated with one specimen of this solemnly moving monster, he would find him full of that sort of sportiveness classed as humor. Though the elephant often does quaint, ludicrous, and unexpected things, the grim expression of his countenance never changes. How can we know what internal feelings move him? He may be all alive with merriment inside, while none of the fun permeates his thick skin. The superior intelligence of this creature is undoubted, and it stands to reason that some humorous feeling should compose a part, though the evidence is not as conclusive as in many other animals. It has never been quite convenient for me to keep specimens in my house; and, not having had a veritable elephant on my hands at any time of my life, I am sorry to say that my opportunities for studying his character have been circumscribed. I have given some observation to those great vagrant elephants that are always to be found loafing about zoölogical gardens and following travelling shows; but I must depend largely upon well-authenticated anecdotes to sustain my conclusions.

There is no positive, unmistakable proof that the elephant does any of his many tricks from motives pure of mischief; other and graver impulses, revenge especially, also move him. There is much evidence, however, that his wantonness, and often his revenges, do partake largely of humor. The oft-told anecdote of the elephant whose trunk was pricked by a tailor, and who punished him by spirting muddy water over him and his work, shows not only retaliation, but a real sense of humor as well, in the nicety with which the redress was gauged. He undoubtedly enjoyed it; this delicate discrimination shows this. He was evidently a little irritated by the prick, yet he understood the act as it was meant and returned it in kind, for had he been less intelligent and destitute of a sense of humor, he would have been enraged, and that would have been no joke to the tailor! The freak of an escaped elephant who tried to enter a crockery store too small for him, must also have been prompted by an appreciation of the absurd unfitness of things.

A story is told of an artist who wanted a sketch of an elephant, with trunk raised and mouth open, and got his friend to go with him to the Jardin des Plantes to induce the attitude he wanted, by throwing fruit into the open mouth. With a spirit of economy, or mischief, or perhaps both, the friend sometimes made the motion without throwing the fruit. The elephant put up with this several times, much to the gratification of the artist's friend, but not to the final satisfaction of the painter himself. The brute, getting tired of the imposition, filled his trunk with water from a bucket near by; and then, ignoring the agent as not of sufficient consequence to meet the full requirements of his resentment, he turned his battery full upon the artist, as the real offender, with such force as to knock



THE ELEPHANT'S RESENTMENT.

him off the stool, and to ruin the sketch. How he came to understand the connection between the two offenders it is difficult to say ; but he somehow knew that the attitude was required for a purpose, and seeing the painter busy upon the paper, he reasoned that there was where the interest of the whole project was centred, and therefore set to work to spoil all. It is too much to suppose that he had any idea of the nature of the work. He had all his life been associated with man, and knew that his purposes were often beyond his ken, but also knew his ways well enough to understand that what he saw him busy about was a matter of interest to him. Considering the great intelligence that prompted the act, does any one believe there was no inward chuckle, no internal enjoyment of the poor artist's discomfiture, and that the deed itself was not in part animated by a desire to see his ridiculous plight? As in the case of the tailor, a more savage revenge was in his power, but in that there would have been no fun for anybody.





DOGS AND THEIR FUN.

DOGS have humor beyond a doubt. That it is not often unmistakably manifest I will admit ; but sometimes it is well defined, and therefore I need not argue the question, and bring up a great array of uncertain testimony to prove that I *may* be right. This, however satisfactory to myself, for I have much to sustain it that cannot be put in language, would be insufficient for the reader. In the case of dogs, however, I stand on no such equivocal ground. I have but to tell a few facts that have fallen under my own observation, to establish my claim, yet it is singular—very—that this motive so seldom appears as absolutely the governing one in dog's doings. If some dogs are gifted with humor, all have it to a greater or less degree. There is probably no man entirely without some sense of humor, though some may seem quite devoid of it. On the other hand, there are born wags,—they can't help it! So with their brute companions. Now and then a dog is gifted in like manner ; while most of the race so mingle various impulses in their sportiveness that the waggery cannot be detected as a positive element. But, fortunately for my purpose, there are cases where nothing else will explain their motives.

In my boyhood days there was left in my charge a remarkably intelligent pointer, well broken for bird-hunting and consequently valuable. But boys care little for this, and no sooner was

Wallace fairly in my possession than I, with the help of all the boys in the village, set about extending his education to other branches of field sports. Especially did we initiate him into the mysteries of rabbit-hunting, of which he was very fond. But he had no stomach, for woodchucks. He was a nervous, timid creature, and, after the first encounter, where he disgraced himself, he seemed to feel it always afterwards. It became a matter of great amusement with us to find a woodchuck hole and invite Wallace to join the sport. The moment he smelled out the character of the occupant, however, he would turn to us with a most ludicrous, *shamed* look; and, smiling an excuse, he would positively decline all farther participation. I say smiling, for he had this power, not uncommon with dogs of his species, as well as with setters, greyhounds, and sometimes spaniels. This smile consists in twisting the nose to one side, and showing the teeth in a pleasant way, which then have an entirely different look from what they have when exposed in anger. The expression is unmistakably that of a smile, and always denotes the same sentiments of mirth and pleasure as in man.

One day my companions and myself were crossing a wheat-field after harvest. Wallace was quite a distance ahead, beating about here and there, that vibrating tail in constant motion, smelling in the stubble for rabbit tracks; and we were watching his movements lest we should not be ready to join the chase the moment he should strike the scent. Suddenly the dog left earth, jumping high in air,—so high that his form, for a moment, was clearly cut against the blue distance. Of course, this unexpected performance was greeted with peals of laughter from his boy companions; and he had almost grown to be a boy himself, so perfect was the sympathy and understanding between

us. Wallace looked foolishly at us for a moment, then shrivelled up his nose and grinned as was his wont upon such occasions, wagging his tail undecidedly all the time—in short, trying to lie out of it by every device at his command, since he was not able to speak. Seeing, however, that he had not yet succeeded, he did not propose to give it up so. Again he began his run as usual, snuffing zealously in the stubble, and presently he bounced up again as before, and then turned to us again to smile complacently. It was to assure us that the performance was purely for our amusement, and that he was overjoyed at his success. He played this antic several times ; in fact, he overdid it so that we were led to investigate. Going to the scene of the first leap, we found there a large toad ; he had put his nose upon it in the weeds, and this had startled him so that he made that first extraordinary jump. Now we laughed at him in ridicule, which he perfectly understood. He looked very silly and tried the trick no more.

There were many things worth recording in this dog's life that summer, though nothing else that I now remember that bears directly upon our subject. We quite spoiled the dog's training, I suppose ; still, the pleasure to all was worth the price of another trained dog. The unrestrained hunting and free companionship of a lot of wanton boys was a new and joyful experience to the animal ; as for myself, the long happy days of that untrammelled season with the boys and that dog still shines out a bright spot in my retrospect of the past.

Happy, happiest days ! We were what I read in a great but almost unknown poem :

“ A race of real children ! not too wise,
Too learned, or too good ; but wanton, fresh,

Humor in Animals.

And bandied up and down by love and hate ;
 Not unresentful when self-justified ;
 Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy ;
 Mad at our sports like withered leaves in winds.—

Unfading recollections ! at this hour
 The heart is almost mine with which I felt,
 From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,
 The paper kite, high among fleecy clouds,
 Pull at her rim like an impetuous courser ;
 Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
 Beheld her breast the winds, then suddenly
 Dashed headlong, and rejected by the storm.

. At last,
 When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars
 Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went,
 Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.”

—*The Prelude.*

A fine-looking dog, of mixed breed, owned by a friend of mine, was a great wag or practical joker, though the stolid indifference with which he regarded the havoc he sometimes wrought would not seem to indicate the least pleasure on his part. In truth, this acting was overdone, and would certainly have betrayed him, had not the excitement consequent upon his rascally tricks centred all attention upon his victim. Frank was in every way a sly dog ; he never seemed to do any thing openly, never appeared to see or observe any thing that was going on around him, yet his knowledge of facts, when he wanted to use them, proved that nothing escaped his notice. This naturally made him a great favorite with his master, who was himself a lover of fun. He found the traits that he would detest in a fellow-man, cunning and interesting in his dog. Frank had conceived a dangerous fancy for playing upon the

nervousness of horses, and seemed to know by instinct the most timorous, who were the best for his purpose. He had learned, in some way, that certain horses of a suspicious disposition and high nervous temperament could be made frantic by feeling the unexpected touch of an unseen object upon their heels,—that they would kick with frenzy at the unknown thing, taking whatever object fell within range as the cause of the offence, and kicking away while it lasted! So Frank, when unobserved, or believing himself so, would stand in his master's door, in the most innocent manner, and look up and down the street, quietly selecting a suitable victim. He made his choice among the horses driven in by the farmers and hitched along the sides of the street, as is the custom in smaller towns, while their owners go among the stores to “do their trading.” Having made his selection with unerring judgment, Frank would saunter down the sidewalk until nearly opposite the unsuspecting animal, when he would halt, look around idly, as if he hardly knew what he wanted. If happily there were another dog in the street or over the way, Frank would trot out to exchange greetings with him; but on his return he would invariably take his course to the rear of his intended victim. Then, smelling along the ground, and seemingly by the merest accident in the world, he would touch the sensitive heels with his nose, taking good care, however, that his head should not be in the way of the flying hoofs; when he would stand near by, scarcely a spectator, so great was his indifference, while dashboard and buggy-front are flying in splinters all over the street, and everybody is too much excited and interested in the strange alarm of the horse to notice a dog standing there,—save those who know *him and his tricks!* All this the dog did accomplish upon one occasion to my

certain knowledge. He was suspected of being the cause of a disastrous runaway, being seen near the start, but there was no stronger evidence against him.

A well-to-do farmer, known as Old Markey, lived just on the outskirts of the village. He had turned the management of a splendid farm over to the boys, and occupied himself with fine horses, of which he kept a number for his own special use. One day Old Markey came riding down the main street upon a prancing young stallion ; the saddle, bridle, and all trappings were span new, creaking at every motion ; horse and rider seemed in perfect sympathy. The latter, at least, enjoyed the gallant outfit to the utmost, when in an evil moment Frank sighted him. He evidently took in the situation at once. As the horse moved sideways, the progress down the street was not rapid. The *heel* end of the horse being also towards his master's store, gave the villainous dog ample time and opportunity for his favorite trick ; circumstances seemed all to favor him. A wagon, standing just in front, shielded his direct approach, and, under cover of this, he slyly walked as far as it would serve, then emerged far enough to give the magic touch and withdrew. The deed was done, and the giddy heels flew heavenwards, the astonished rider earthwards. But catching upon the creature's neck, there Old Markey hung for a moment, calling lustily for help. The excited animal did not attempt to run, as he had n't time enough for the kicking he wanted to do ; but standing in his fore-tracks, he expressed his feelings with great vigor. When Old Markey was helped down unhurt, and stood soothing the trembling beast, he said he supposed it was a durned bat-fly that did it. But Frank did not escape this time unobserved ; a man, who knew him, was sitting in his buggy a little way up the street,



“CROSS MY PALM WITH SILVER!”

waiting for his wife to do a little "trading," and noticed Frank's manœuvre and saw the evident intention. He got out, came down the walk to where the crowd was gathered, and quietly whispered in my friend's ear, that he had better get rid of his *funny* dog! My friend had for some time held this opinion himself, but was uncertain what to do with him.

Only a few days afterwards I became the unconscious means of ridding him of this dangerously jocose dog, and without any effort on his part. Meeting some young people in his store one afternoon, we were told that there was a camp of gypsies in the woods across the river. I borrowed my friend's horse and carriage, and taking one of the young ladies, we drove over, and Frank followed. While we were eagerly listening to our fortunes, told by an old hag with a straw bonnet on upside down and hind-side before, the tawny and wrinkled visage looking out from the opening intended for the neck, one of the rascally gypsy-men stole the dog. But when we missed him, and realized the prospect of his making one of their vicious horses kick out his master's brains, we felt that Frank might not have lived in vain.

Another dog of my acquaintance, also belonging to a friend, was a funny joker too. He was a mongrel of medium size, not too tall nor yet too short, but just about right, in fact, for his own waggish purposes. My friend and I used often to walk together for pleasure, to which Sport (his appropriate name) was no slight addition. We left the more populated part of the town, and went where the roads were grassy and the lots open. The pigs were allowed to run at liberty, and were frequently met with, quietly cropping the grass and grunting their satisfaction. This sight was always regarded by Sport as an opportunity for

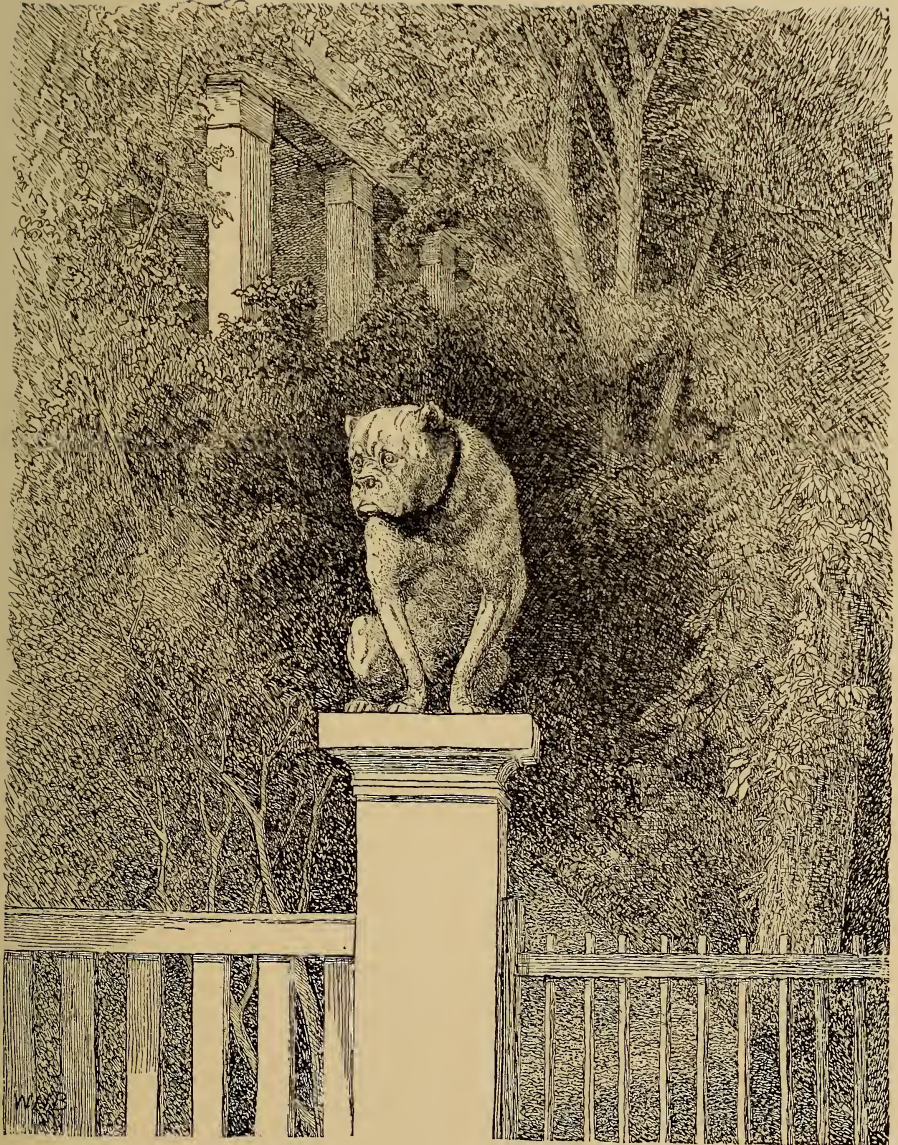
him to justify the choice of his name. He would immediately make for the pig, who, of course, started to run. Sport, running up even with his side, would not attempt to catch him by the near ear, or any such practice of ordinary dogs, as the experienced swine undoubtedly expected. He knew a way of getting more fun out of a pig than that! When the proper distance was established, and the two animals were just in position, he would thrust his head under the pig's belly, adroitly catch him by the opposite flank, and suddenly come to a stand-still with a brace. This, with the pig's momentum, would, of course, bring him entirely over, and he would, to his great astonishment, land upon his back instead of his feet at the next leap! Then Sport would let him go, turn to us with wagging tail and head on one side, and give us a whimsical, inquiring look, as much as to ask: "How is that for a joke on the pig?"

Within the circle of my canine acquaintance was one Kanuck, also a character. Kanuck was a bull-dog, but the savagery of his nature was tempered by a great love and faithfulness to his master, and, what was most singular for a dog of his race, he had an unusual sense of the ridiculous, and would be at great pains to get a little joke on somebody, even using his own unfavorable appearance for the purpose. Beside terrorizing all the dogs in the neighborhood, save one, a Siberian blood-hound, he found his chief pleasure in frightening passers-by with his ugly looks, without in the least compromising himself. Leaping from the ground to the top of the fence, and from there to the cap of the gate-post, he would sit watching up and down the street for a suitable victim to practise upon—that is, a passenger that appeared nervous or timid enough for his purpose. When such a one appeared on the sidewalk, he would seem indifferent to their

Humor in Animals.

approach, looking anywhere but in their direction, until his intended victim had arrived almost opposite to the post. Then he would drop suddenly down in front and glower at him with his bloodshot eyes and his projecting teeth, and with such ferocity as usually to induce a detour into the gutter. Few had the pluck to face his formidable appearance and brush past him on the narrow sidewalk, though he said nothing or uttered not a threat in any form, more than was apprehended in the look of him. When the passer-by had mustered courage to return to the walk, the rascal would turn to his master, or whoever happened to see the performance, wagging his tail by way of a laugh,—for he was not of a breed that smile with their features,—and showing every evidence of pleasure at the success of his joke. Unless some one of the family were in the yard or on the porch, he never indulged in the waggery, but would repeat the joke as often as he found victims, while he had an audience. Kanuck died a violent death at last.





KANUCK ON HIS POST.



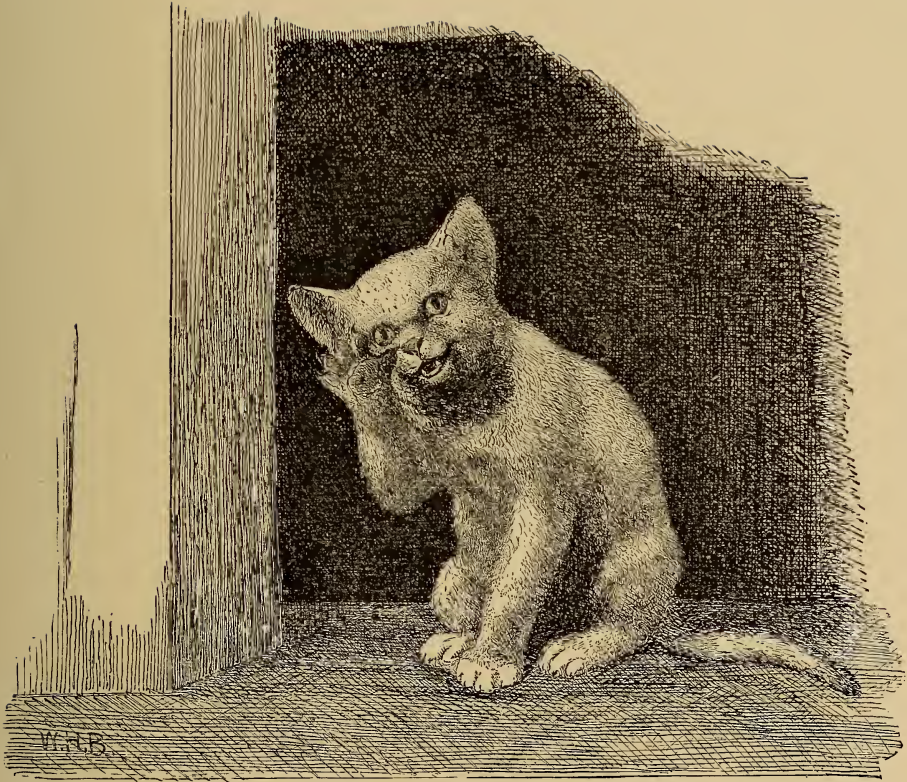
CATS.

WHEN cats were called, there was a commotion in all the area comprising the backyards of the entire square. Voices, half human in tone, arose in every quarter, some in querulous complaint or angry recrimination, some in long-drawn sorrowing wails, followed by a general movement in the direction of the call. A flood of all possible feline colors poured over the intervening walls and fences. Black, white, spotted, yellow, gray, tortoise, and tabby, appeared for a moment, as upon the crests of waves, to go down again and reappear rolling over the next fence-barrier, until, in a moment, every cranny gleamed with eyes of green, and every opening in wall or fence was filled with heads struggling for precedence, all eager to be heard; and all indeed were heard in one mingled jargon, wild, unintelligible, and to no purpose, so that I shall be obliged to draw my conclusions mostly from what I have myself observed, and my studies have been almost entirely upon the life and character of one individual cat, with whom I enjoyed very intimate acquaintance,—an interesting and very remarkably intelligent pet of my own. He was known to fame in all the neighborhood round about as Cupid, a most appropriate name, considering his character and personal beauty. His features were symmetrical and classical; his white coat, set off with gray ears and tail, was soft and fine as ermine. Such was his appearance. But Cupid had claims to



CATS.

consideration far beyond those of mere physical beauty. Having been taught many accomplishments, he was through them enabled to develop attributes unusual in his kind, which might otherwise have lain dormant to the end of his life. Among other accomplishments, and perhaps his greatest one, Cupid had been taught to turn a somerset, the performance of which he seemed to regard as the highest reward he could possibly offer for the greatest favor. When I remained from home overnight, he would, the next day, take his station upon the gate-post, and there spend most of the day, spitting at passing dogs and awaiting my return. When I came, there was no boisterous demonstration of joy like that of a dog, but he would demurely come down from his perch, and, with tail erect, march in front of me to the door, every now and then turning a somerset as his best expression of pleasure. Cupid had a little vocabulary of his own that I understood, and which he knew I understood. He could say he would n't, or "*won't*" about as plainly as a wayward child could say it, and very much in the same decided manner, by an abrupt little mew, which he never used but when he wished to refuse to do what he was told to. He had another word, so to speak, consisting of a longer and milder mew, intended for compliance, but not always to be depended upon—for Cupid had quite enough deceit in him to justify his name. I would sometimes tell him to turn a somerset, when he felt either too lazy or too mischievous, and he would at first say he would n't. I would reply, sternly: "You will." Knowing better all the time, he would perhaps refuse again, then seem to acquiesce, even putting his head down at each command, as if to comply, but all the while he kept working gradually away from me. When, at last, he was safely out of my reach, he would shoot up the stairs



CUPID'S REAL FEELINGS.

like a rocket, and, turning upon the upper landing, would bestow upon me such a whimsical, facetious look as no physiognomist could mistake. Had he such a thing as a thumb about him, he would have put it to his nose ; but this was not needed. The expression and the feeling that prompted it were just as apparent and well understood.

Sometimes Cupid would take a notion that he would like to perform for my amusement in the backyard. In this case he would come to me and ask me to open the door, and going before me, would be profuse in his somersets, keeping a suspicious eye on me all the time. When the door was opened he would stand in the way of its being closed, and look up at me with a cry which I understood as well as though he had said, "Come on." Not being able to close the door without hurting the cat, I would go on ; then, having gained this much, he would utter a little purr of satisfaction and lead the way to the kitchen door, alternately turning somersets and casting suspicious glances back at me. Here he pursued the same tactics as before, until we arrived at the door that opened from the kitchen to the backyard, when his eagerness to begin would sometimes lead him to go out before I had closed the door. Then I would pretend to believe that I had done all that was required of me, and would shut the door with Cupid on one side, myself on the other. Immediately I was made to understand that I was to come out and be entertained. Cupid's scratching and caterwauling on the outside of the door could not be mistaken ; so, of course, there was nothing left but to accept his summons, and to go out and see the performance. This he did his utmost to make extraordinary, every now and then regarding me with a look of inquiry, as if to say, "What do you think of that for agility?" He would generally conclude

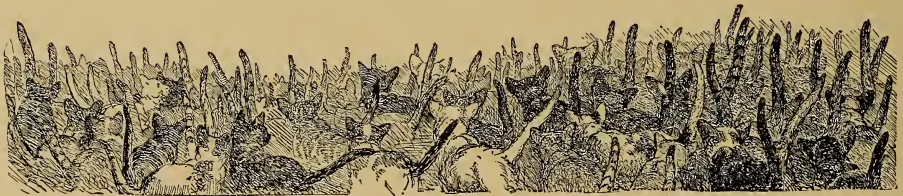
the show upon the top of the trellis, when he would mew for me to come near, that he might jump upon my head, and he insisted that I should make his descent easy down my back by stooping to the right inclination. This done, Cupid would graciously let me go.

Cupid, in his fashion, was an expert retriever, and greatly enjoyed the sport. The object of his chase was a small-sized hickory-nut. I used to carry a supply of these nuts, well chosen as to size (he would not take a large one), always in one particular pocket. At evening, when I was seated, he would come to me, thrust his paw into that pocket and try to extract a nut. Failing in this, after much effort, he would pause, look up at me and mew ; if I still paid no attention, pretending to be absorbed in reading or talk, he would frequently go in search of a nut that he had played with before, bring it to me, raise himself upon his hind feet, place it upon my knee, and then pat my arm. If still unnoticed, he would knock the nut off upon the floor and pounce upon it again with ostentatious effort, bring it back, and try again to direct my attention to it. I don't know that he would ever weary of this thing until he had succeeded, for his perseverance did not seem in the least, to flag before my patience was exhausted, and indeed I had no heart to try him further.

One evening, as I was about going out to keep an engagement, Cupid came to me with a nut. I stepped towards the door and threw the nut ; he divined my intention, and had the nut back to me before I could reach the door. The next throw, however, enabled me to retreat in time. The parlor was on the second floor, the door into the back parlor was frequently ajar, as was also the door leading from the back parlor into the hall. My mother called to me that Cupid was coming, and afterwards

told me what occurred. When I had closed the door and hurried down the stairs, the cat, after recovering the nut, looked around, and seeing that I had escaped, he seemed nonplussed for a moment ; then, remembering there was another way, he ran and, with a jump, threw his weight against the door ; as he expected, it yielded ; the other was latchless also, and the *reasoning* creature reached the lower hall with the nut in his mouth just as I was putting on my overcoat. I stopped and played with him, though I was in a hurry, until he was tired ; then, without a word of thanks or apology, Cupid abruptly left me, to be late at my appointment.

Much has been written, many stories are told to illustrate the sagacity of this favored member of every household. The tales of cats are innumerable.





THE LION'S REPLY.

“WELL, no, I hardly think we are at any time sportive enough to lay claims to humor, if I really understand what constitutes that faculty; I doubt if I do. At any rate, I don't think any of our tribe would relish what you would call a joke, played upon him; I fear it would not result, ultimately, in amusement for the joker! One unfortunate member of our family had been captured for exhibition, when too young to resist, by your race; and I have been told that he came very near being the victim of a practical joke by a man, rendered reckless by the juice of grapes, the sweat of grain, or something of that sort. He was of that division of your race which you call *Irish*, and was said, by his friends, to be a rollicking, thoughtless fellow, who happened along when this poor captive lay on the floor of his cage asleep. Seeing the end of his tail hanging out between the bars, the bright idea struck this man of the Irish variety, that it would be a 'foin joke to put a bit of a blaze to the brush on the ind of his tail loike!' He already had a match lighted for the purpose, when the keeper appeared and put a stop to the dangerous experiment. My relative said to the other animals, that when he understood the extent of the humiliation intended for him, he was so enraged that he could hardly keep from rending open his cage, and seeking among men for the miscreant. Think of the mortification he would have suf-



THE LION.

ferred, and how ridiculous he would have appeared, the end of his tail singed and garnished with unseemly sores in place of that beautiful brush with which nature had decorated it! So you see how we lions would esteem a joke upon ourselves. As to our practising them upon others, I hardly think any act of ours in connection with other creatures, would be regarded by them in that light. At all events they always seem to take our attentions quite serious-like. Still I don't say we are entirely lacking in taste of that sort. I could just roar to get hold of an unctuous wag now; I think I could take him all in, and appreciate the joke fully."

Though this superb brute disclaims all feeling of humor, I still think that I have discovered in him a sort of grim sense of the humorous side of life, unrecognized by himself or by the casual observer. The more intelligent keeper or student of animals will now and then detect little gleams of it in many of the lion's acts. But I grant that the evidence is not abundant in the case of any of the larger species of the feline race.





NOT SUCH A LAUGH AS THIS.



THE FACETIOUS BEAR.

THERE is no doubt about the waggishness of bears, who can even laugh at their own jokes ; not uproariously, as the laughter of those jolly priests the French artists paint so admirably, but they can assume a well-defined expression of mirth. They are as unmistakably jocose as the most incorrigible jester of our own species, and even harsher than his mortal compeer. In either creature, when jocularitv gets a hold, it seems to take full possession of him to the complete subjugation of all else. The mind of the joker, whether man or brute, is constantly occupied with the subject, and his license becomes intolerable. It is only when we can consult our own convenience, and go to the place of confinement of the one who must be kept chained, that we can enjoy his pranks. We can leave him when weary of him, and he cannot pursue us for a practical joke.

There is a great difference in individuals among bears, as well as among men, in this respect. All bears are more or less addicted to joking ; yet all do not give themselves entirely over to it, making it the main object and study of their lives.

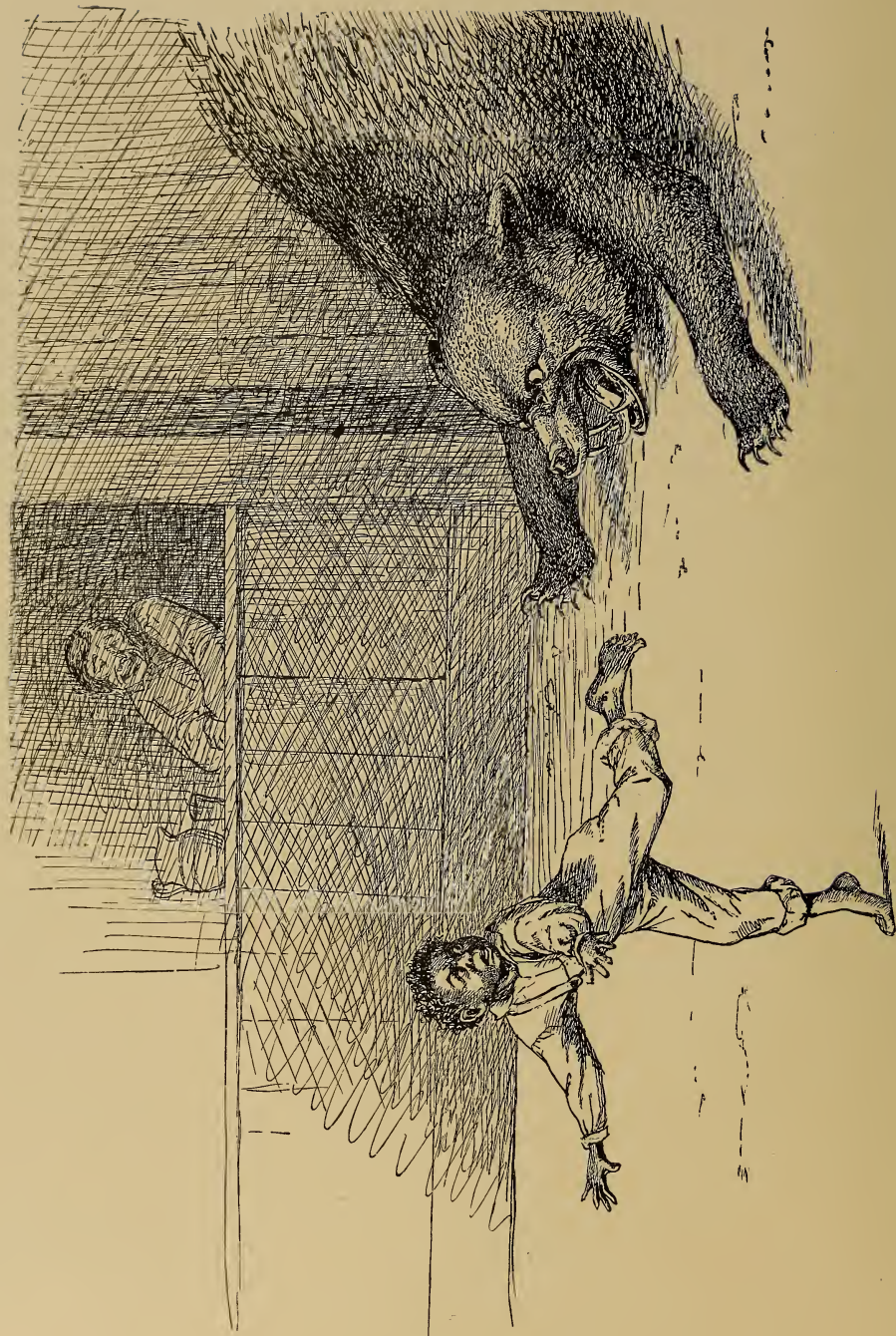
In my younger days I attended a political mass-meeting which was to last many days. Great preparations had been made for a "mammoth meeting." Steamboats were chartered at different points to convey the eager statesmen and the unselfish patriots to the spot, and, as is usual at such times, all sorts of queer objects



Y.H.B.

EXPRESSION OF MIRTH THE BEAR CAN ASSUME.

were brought to attract customers to the numerous refreshment booths. For this purpose a speculative passenger upon a boat that lay in port near mine was taking a half-grown bear or cub. I discovered this animal as I came upon deck early in the morning, and saw him sitting upon the top of the pilot house, where he was chained to keep him out of the way of mischief. Of course I became interested at once, and sat down to watch his movements, knowing well that he was not going to remain seated a great while. And, sure enough, in a moment his owner emerged from the caboose with a large platter of refuse food for Bruin's breakfast, and a short ladder, which he placed in position to ascend to the top of the pilot house. When the bear saw the end of the ladder appear above the roof he became lively at once; he rose to his feet, stretched his neck out until he could see over far enough to discover his master, and then settled back with an expression of devilish roguery, which pervaded his whole being as he waited for the man's head to come within range of his mischievous paw. Then, with a heavy box on the ear, he sent master, ladder, broken platter, cold victuals, and all, tumbling to the deck! Looking down upon the ruin he had wrought, which included the prospects of his own breakfast, he turned and capered around his platform in the greatest glee, his ears laid back and his features assuming an actual human expression of laughter. But Bruin's pleasure, though keen, was of short duration; for the enraged master, getting a stick instead of food, again placed the ladder, and again ascended, taking great care this time to keep his head out of reach of his pet's paws. Bruin got a good cudgelling instead of chicken bones and the like, and he had ample time to digest his food for reflection before he got any breakfast. This was delayed several



AS THE BEAR APPEARED TO THE BOY.



THE RELATIVE SIZE.

hours to teach him to accept life's blessings promptly, when proffered.

Naturally, I became interested in this creature, and determined to look for him upon the grounds. It was not hard to find him, though the grounds were extensive; for a bear of his genius was sure to make himself known wherever he was. Seeing a great crowd around a booth, from which came frequent roars of laughter, I mixed with the revellers, and there, sure enough, I found my jolly acquaintance of the morning. A piece of rope had been added to his chain, giving him altogether a run of twenty feet or more. As I came up the cub was sitting demurely by the corner of the booth. I scarcely saw him at first, and a man was enticing a little boy with a stick of candy, bought of the cub's proprietor, to come near and get it. The unwonted kindness made the boy a little suspicious, though he did not know of what, for he did not yet see the bear, only the candy. The temptation proved too much for him, however; mastering his doubts, he marched up, took the candy, and, with a delighted expression in his face, turned to go. This was the moment of the cub's opportunity. With mouth and eyes wide open, ears laid back, and his head close to the ground to make himself frightful, he sprang out of his corner, striking his paws hard upon the ground on purpose. The poor boy turned a look back; one glance was enough. He started, with a scream of horror, to run, when the bear, close to his heels, adroitly tripped him; the poor boy, more terrified than before, rolled, tumbled, and screamed out of the way. The bear did not attempt to hurt him, seeming satisfied with what he had already done. He sat down and watched the boy's frantic performances with every evidence of keen delight, and laughing as he had in the morning

when he boxed his master off the ladder. As the boy jumped up and fled from the scene still holding fast to the candy, poor fellow! the cub returned to his place by the stall, evidently expecting the sport to be renewed. He was not disappointed. New-comers bought more candy, and the supply of boys was kept up by the uproar and laughter. So the rude fun went on until a little colored boy was almost thrown into spasms by his fear. He could not be appeased; he trembled and sobbed convulsively for long after, and described the bear as "the biggest black thing he ever see!" Then even the practical jokers began to think that the joke had been carried far enough, and all turned their attention to soothing the little darkey. It took a great deal of effort; much coaxing and mild ridicule were needed to induce the poor little fellow to come near enough to institute a comparison of size. With a look of intense disgust at the jolly little villain, who seemed to take it all in, and stood upon his hind feet at the extreme of his chain, the boy said "he did n't care, it was a *bar* anyway." But much kindly speech and a pocket full of candy seemed at length to mollify him, and he went his way partly consoled.





THE MONKEY'S SOLILOQUY.

“ I SUPPOSE we are regarded by man himself as the nearest of kin to him. Why, then, I wonder, were not all the human attributes, that were to be given to the lower animals at all, bestowed upon us? It certainly seems strange that such a human power as that of speech should have been conferred upon creatures so far away in physical organization, so totally unlike, and seemingly so illy constructed for its exercise, as those parrots and a few other birds. The parrots are said to be our feathered counterparts. That may be the explanation. They may be chosen to reflect humanity among the birds, as we do among the mammals. In each grand division of animal nature some trait of man's character is perhaps represented in some chosen species, so that man's nature permeates the whole. The choicest of human gifts may have been bestowed upon parrots to compensate for their great deficiencies otherwise.

“ Still this explanation is not satisfactory either. It seems too much that the gift of both speech and song should be enjoyed solely by the birds. Why, there is not a living creature below man that can utter a human sound or a melodious note, save birds alone! Frogs, katydids, and a thousand insects may think they do, but they don't. Now, I confess, when I think of what *might have been*, had we monkeys had these gifts, instead of those unfit creatures with their inflexible lips, or rather teeth



THE MONKEY'S SOLILOQUY.

on the outside of their face, my soul is filled with bitterness. Ah! but it's a compliment to us after all; they dare not trust us with any more endowments. Jealousy is the one thing that keeps us back. Had not these gifts been withheld, there would have been no check to our advance.

“And man himself does not have *all* that he desires by any means. These same birds can soar far above the earth—a power which he, with all his invention cannot contrive for himself, though I believe he expects to have it conferred upon him in a higher life to succeed this. *Perhaps!* But that's nothing to us.

“Come to think of it, that's not a bad idea of mine, that man's qualities are echoed, as it were, through the whole animal kingdom by certain favored species as delegates. If that be so, I wonder which of the reptiles holds the honor. Serpents? No, I should rather think the lizards. Though it may be presumption for me to speculate at all upon this point, I don't suppose man would acknowledge a very near kinship to any of them. But I can't help thinking. No wrong in that, I suppose. Insects? Now, which among the insects could, with any show of reason, claim precedence? Butterflies, ants, bees, katydids, pinchbugs, tumblebugs, or what? I can't tell, I am sure; that's too much for my philosophy. And there are still the cold-blooded creatures—fishes, clams, etc.—to be considered.

“And if I could settle all this satisfactorily, it would throw no light upon the question under consideration. Perhaps we *have* our share of humanity, and are covetous in wanting more. Let us consider. We have not speech. That's true; but we can chatter with the best of them. And that's human, I'm sure. In our four feet we have four hands as well,—but what of it?

No one denies our capacity to cut up antics. We are by common consent voted the harlequins of animals, and man wants to know if we have humor. As he himself would say: 'We have n't any thing else.' And there it is again,—another important lack! The jesters of the world, and not a shadow of an expression of mirth can our features assume! I hear that several species of dogs can smile, and that bears laugh unmistakably. Even this spiteful cat at my feet, squalling and spitting just because I take hold of her tail, they say, can assume a facetious expression when she feels like it, which she evidently does not at the present moment. But we, man's nearest cousins, are denied even that approach to man's expression.

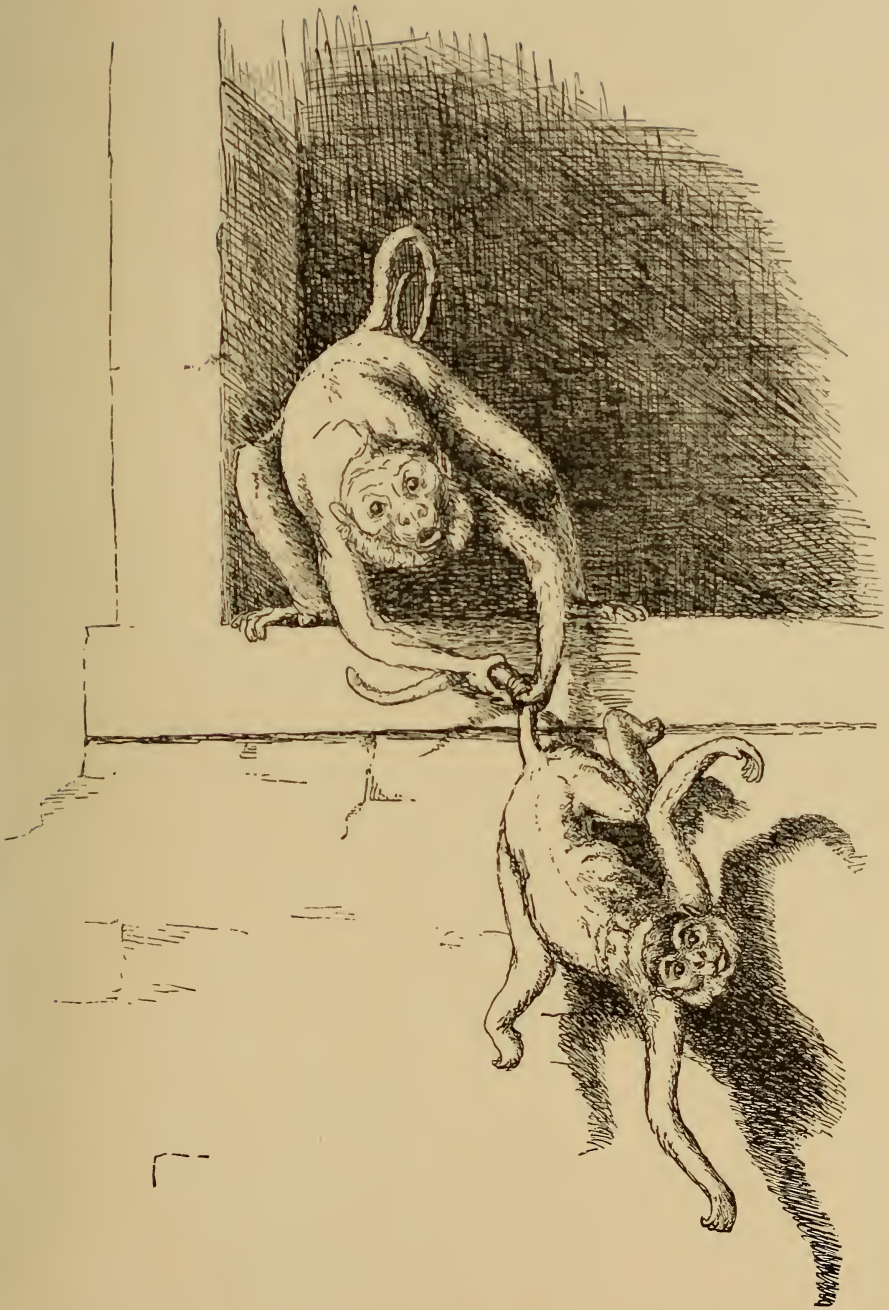
"We can always provoke laughter in our great kinsfolk. But could we join in the laugh, talk, and sing a jolly song with them, it would be a great comfort to us. Then we monkeys would feel so much more in sympathy with them, and should be encouraged to hurry up our evolution to the point of equality."





THE TWO MONKEYS.

AN eminent American artist gave me the following bit of his experience with two monkeys he had in his possession while living in Rome. He first bought the larger one and had him for some time, when there came an opportunity to purchase another. Concluding that there must be at least twice as much interest and fun in two monkeys as in one, he hastened to close the bargain. Still he was not without some apprehension as to the reception that the new-comer, being smaller, might receive from the one already installed. When he entered the little anteroom where the old monkey was kept, with the little one in his arms, it was interesting to watch the behavior of both. The little one, being a stranger to all, was timid and frightened at every thing, and did n't know what to expect or whom to trust. "Jack," as the larger one was called, was busy at the moment with the mysteries of a knot in a bit of rope he had found. Looking up and seeing the other, he lost interest in the investigation of the knot, and riveted his gaze upon his kinsman. As his master dropped the poor little fellow on the floor, in front of him, he still continued his gaze, evidently not having made up his mind as to how he would take the intrusion. It required time to consider, and all the while he glowered at the stranger, who returned the gaze in anxious suspense. At length he concluded to accept him, and reaching out, drew the little one to him, and clasped him in his



THE TWO MONKEYS.

arms, then turned to his master and the friends who had accompanied him, chattering threats and denunciations, through them, to all the world, or that portion of it, however large, that should propose enmity or separation to his bosom friend of two minutes' standing. The little one, too, caught the infection and joined his chatter with that of his new friend, which seemed a combined defiance to every foe that would break the bonds then and there established. All this, of course, was very satisfactory to the artist, relieving him of any apprehensions he may have felt. He also found, soon after this happy turn affairs had taken, that his calculation as to the amount of fun in two monkeys rather than one, was more than justified, so far as quantity was concerned. The fun, indeed, was as the square of the number of monkeys; but most of it was fun to the monkeys alone, while he had all the care and anxiety for his portion.

One morning the larger one succeeded in breaking his bonds, and with his help the little one was also free. They were scarcely missed before an excited woman came to complain that the monkeys were in her garden doing all sorts of mischief. The first she knew of their presence they were pelting her with green figs from out her own tree. My friend sent his man after them, but no sooner did the pursuer appear than they retreated over the opposite wall into an adjoining garden, whence came a clamor of protest for the mischief they contrived to do on their way across, and so the journey was continued until the man lost track of them altogether, and was obliged to return and report accordingly. My friend, with mingled feelings of sorrow and relief, gave up his troublesome pets for lost.

The day wore away, and no monkeys. Just as evening was coming on, their owner became aware of some commotion across

a little court in a window opposite the one at which he was sitting, and, looking up, there he saw his runaway pets. Having escaped all penalties of their rascalities through the day, they had returned and chosen this stage for such amusing antics as would conciliate their master and get them off from punishment. Their antics did not, however, seem to win from him any notice sufficiently favorable to be trusted. My friend kept a grave expression upon his face all the while, though it was hard ; it was almost beyond his self-control to keep from laughing at their anxious drolleries. Finally the monkeys exhausted their resources, and seemed to be in despair, when suddenly the larger one had an inspiration. He caught the lesser one by the tail and began swinging him in the air like a pendulum. This absurd action, together with the anxious, rueful expression with which they both watched its effect upon their master, proved too much for him, and he burst into a fit of laughter, in which the two relieved creatures joined with a glad chatter, the best they could do for laughter, and peace was restored.

As with the practical joker, the discomfort or annoyance of others seems to be the monkey's sole idea of fun. I remember some years ago, at Central Park, I used to watch with much interest the performances of a solitary monkey, who, for some reason, had been left alone in a large cage that had been recently occupied by many of his race. In his loneliness, he seemed to be hard put to it for amusement, but he found no little entertainment in tantalizing a large leopard whose cage was next to his. A board partition or screen had been inserted between the two cages for greater safety, but a little aperture had been made, probably by the monkeys, by tearing away splinters from a crack or joint between two boards, large enough to afford a partial view

from one cage to the other. The leopard spent much of his time in peering through this hole, longing to get hold of the monkey, and the monkey took no small delight in passing before the opening, upon a convenient perch. Seemingly unconscious of the leopard's proximity, he would sit there for a long time all absorbed in a pretended search for fleas. First on one leg, then on the other he would hitch nearer and still a little nearer to the partition ; and the excitement of the leopard became terrible ! His eyes gleamed, his underlip quivered, his tail thrashed furiously from side to side, but Jacko was just out of reach. When at length, weary of all this, the leopard retreated a little, the monkey would suddenly leap against the partition and quickly back to his perch, while the disappointed brute bounded about his narrow confines in a transport of rage. Then the monkey would sit upon his perch and chatter with delight.





M.H.B.

THE FOX'S VIEWS.



THE FOX'S VIEWS.

“YOU want to know what? Whether we have humor, eh? Well, I don’t want to appear conceited or immodest, in claiming an attribute that you human creatures, with all your penetration, have failed to discover in our make up. Your chief grounds for doubt is that you have not seen it in us. May I modestly suggest that there are many qualities, even in the most familiar things, that have not yet come within human observation? Excuse me, but the wisest of your race admit this fact. Therefore, it is not safe to jump at a conclusion, and found a theory upon the *absence* of evidence. I don’t mind saying that we have a great deal of brutal—that is, non-human sort of humor. That admission seems to shock you, and still lower us in your esteem? Well, why should we care for your opinions? I am glad that you have asked me the question, however, for, though I know well enough your estimate of us, I rejoice at an opportunity of telling you what we think of you. I am aware that this will not concern you much, only I shall call your attention to some facts that you never seem to bestow any thought upon, or if you do, it’s only to pettifog the case with your conscience, and to persuade yourselves against your *smothered* convictions, that hunting us is right. The pleasures of the chase are enjoyed exclusively by you, you think? No; they are shared by almost every living thing. But with the lower animals, except those trained by your

example, it is the business of life. Is that what brutalizes it? When the blood of the victim is the reward of success, the pursuit is brutal? You would reject such a reward with scorn or disgust, simply because it is distasteful to you. The recompense of your success is the *tail* of your victim—the ‘brush,’ as you term it. This is the difference between the refinements of the chase and the depredations of the fox. Still, the hounds and the horses are necessary to you, and they enjoy the sport with as keen a zest as yourselves. But you direct the sport: that you are the master, ennobles the pastime. The brush belongs to the first in at the death. You thrust it under the band of your foolish little hunting-cap, and ride proudly back to feel the swelling heart of a conquering hero. You enjoy the admiration of the females of your race who hail your return with honors and loud acclaim, arrogating all the credit to yourselves, which mostly belongs to the horse you ride.

“ But now to return to my claim of a non-human sort of humor. When you miss your fox, and he succeeds in getting away with his own tail, having, by his cunning, outwitted you all, and circumvented the combined intelligence of a troop of human huntsmen, the sagacity of a pack of hounds, and the speed of all their horses, what does he do? He gains his stronghold high upon the cliff, and looks down upon the rage of baffled hounds, and the rueful expressions on the countenances of the foolish hunters. Do you suppose he does not then, at least, fully appreciate and enjoy the humor of the situation? Don’t deceive yourself!”



RATS.



A RAT'S POINT OF VIEW.

“**W**HY, of course. Though we insist upon being neighborly, it does not imply that kind of intimate acquaintance that would give you an accurate knowledge of our private character. You could n't follow us into our haunts to study our customs and habits. You must therefore content yourselves with conjecture founded upon such facts as you can glean from casual observation. Such of our traits as you know do not bear upon the subject. You hear the noise we make in the walls of your old mansions ; you wonder what it 's all about, and are annoyed at it, and you conclude, naturally, that we are indifferent to your feelings, which is quite true. The hubbub we make is entirely our own affair ; it is for our own fun, or other purposes, without the slightest reference to your wishes. We are likewise just as indifferent to your opinions of us or your estimate of our mental capacity. You have found us wise enough, as a general thing, to elude your devices for our capture, including the cunningly devised traps that don't look at all like traps, but still would hold us fast enough were we unwary enough to walk into them. With all your contrivances for our extermination as a race, we still live, and live just where we please. In your house, if we prefer, or if the barn offers greater attractions we retire to the barn or stable ; we subsist by your involuntary bounty ; we help ourselves at will from such of your supplies as we can reach,

without so much as by your leave ! And we can generally contrive to reach most any provisions we particularly desire.

“ All this you know, but little or nothing of our pastimes, fun, or frolic. We have our own pleasures, of course, and it is most likely that a little of the element of mischief enters in. I will not say any thing more than that for publication at present. Jump at any conclusion you please ; you will get no clue from me ; we are indifferent to you. Your houses are very convenient for us, but though we dine at the same table with you, as it were, we feel no attachment for your kind.”





THE ASS SPEAKS.



THE SPEECH OF THE ASS.

“**B**RETHREN! I say *brethren*, with entire confidence that I appeal to no others, for well do I know that none other than a true brother would give ear to my utterances; and our family connections have grown so large, that I can safely count upon a great portion of almost any audience being composed of its members. But in any case I am justified, for are we not all of one stock, all in one line of progression, in different degrees, to be sure, but all tending to the highest development? Naturalists have adopted a system of classification founded upon a *dental* basis, which applies to all mammals, save ourselves. We form a unique exception. In our case the popular verdict has thrown the *dental* system in the teeth of science, so to speak, and insists that the voice, or the peculiar use made of it, shall determine the status of a claimant to membership in our family. We therefore have the distinction of being the founders of a large and (at least in numbers) respectable class. In fact, when the popular clamor arose for voice-classification, the increase to our numbers was very great, being, as a rule, we were unified mainly by our speech. The united order of asses have been able to drown all opposition, and to force their way to positions they could never have attained except for the noise they made.

“I have said that voice alone is not necessarily a distinguishing mark. There are conditions accompanying the voice

necessary to establish its owner's claim to be classed with the *real asses!* Bulls bellow in anger, and all who hear understand the meaning. Lions roar, and every trembling creature heeds the warning and flies to cover! But your true ass brays on forever, without significance, cause, or reason, and this is just what makes the difference. The unnecessary, uncalled-for, unmeaning exercise of the loud voice stamps the ass at once!

“ But I arose to speak upon the subject of this work, the humor of animals. Each creature, so far as he has been heard from, when called upon, has either claimed its possession for his species, or acknowledged the lack and explained the reasons therefore. But owing to our phenomenal position in the animal kingdom, in order to make myself fully understood, I felt it necessary to show that aside from this one distinguishing mark, which makes us all akin, there may exist, and do exist, great differences between different branches of our family. So when I lay claim—emphatically—to the attribute for us donkeys of the original stock, I cannot include the much larger number of those who are classed with us. Asses by adoption may or may not have the sense of humor. I do not know about it, I am sure. I can only say that I have never discovered that faculty, or any other, particularly, in them. So I will simply make the claim for our own branch, and leave the proof to such anecdotes as may follow.”



DONKEYS' DOINGS.

DONKEYS certainly have the sense of humor to a great degree. They by no means deserve the reputation of being a stupid animal. The ass, so far as I have been able to ascertain, has the brightest intellect of all the group with which his *physical* organization allies him. He has much character. When crossed with the horse, his progeny, the mule, stands by himself (often on his forelegs gesticulating with his hind), as a noticeable individual. His characteristics are quite distinct from either parent, but he ranks far above the horse in point of brains, and is perhaps equal to the ass, from whom he derives his mental powers. Many years ago a number of American artists—Gifford, Whittredge, Bierstadt, two or three others, and myself—started on a jaunt over the mountains in the vicinity of Rome. Arriving at a little town in the evening, we engaged the requisite number of donkeys to be ready early in the morning. I selected mine from a sort of sympathy between us; I looked at him, he looked at me, and we liked each other. I fancied his expression; he regarded me so knowingly on my tour of inspection. I decided upon him at once, thinking that there was something in him,—and *there was!* He seemed to appreciate the compliment, and took kindly to me.

He was not long in justifying my conclusions. We had supper, and retired early to be ready at break of day for the

start. But owing to a little pleasantry on the part of my chosen steed, we lost considerable valuable time. We were awakened before the hour by a great commotion in the square below, and upon going to the window, we looked down upon an exciting scene. Our entire troop of donkeys was loose, dashing about in the wildest, unrestrained manner, my donkey at the head of the charge, while seemingly all the idle inhabitants of the do-nothing little town were there to help secure the animals again. In the midst of the hubbub my enterprising beast was the most active of the herd. Coursing here and there, everywhere; biting, kicking, and striking in all directions; reaching out with his heels toward each retreating group,—on he went in defiance of all efforts to corral him and his companions. As I looked, I was proud of my beast, and called my companions' attention to his superiority. They did not seem to envy me! But there must be an end to all things, and the most obdurate lot of donkeys in the world may be mastered by superior numbers. So when we went out from breakfast, we found that peace had been restored and the wayward creatures again secured, and very thoroughly too, to judge from the amount of small fees we were required to pay to each who claimed to have helped. The animals had still to be fed, as the time allotted for that had been occupied in the frolic. There was finally an end to their feeding, however, as well as to their spree, and the start was made.

When I came to mount my beast I observed that his rein was a stout rope. I was at first inclined to demur, but half guessing the reason, I mounted in silence and took my place in the line, happening to ride just behind Gifford. The path over the mountain was narrow and deeply worn, so that we were obliged to go in single file. We had not travelled many miles before

I was convinced of the justice of my surmise as to the rope. The beast I bestrode had an amount of character that exceeded even my most enthusiastic desires. My hands were actually blistered in a constant effort to restrain the mischief-loving creature from biting the heels of Gifford's little brown charger, who lost all patience with this continued annoyance, and stopped stock-still, turned his head, and gave my brute such a look as set the company in a roar of laughter, and would have brought a blush of shame to any cheek but that of a hardened donkey. The only effect visible upon him, however, was the prudence that induced him to stop also and stand at a safe distance. Gifford's poor persecuted brute had already expended much of his strength in fruitless kicking at this wary beast of mine, who always managed to turn in time to avoid the angry heels. They never hit but once, and that time they hit my shin, which ached for days afterwards. When we finally reached the top of the mountain and stopped for rest and refreshments at the monastery, then I found that my mount, by his constant reaching forward, and dodging back, had worked the saddle so near the rump that in a few rods farther I should have been off, saddle and all. When we prepared to continue the journey, the much-abused donkey that Gifford rode flatly refused to travel at *either end* next to mine, and one of our company who had a less experienced ass suffered the imposition. His trials were not so great, however, as his predecessor's, the descent being less favorable for my donkey's pranks than the climb had been.

From a certain incident, I should judge that the donkey has a taste for, and appreciation of, refined and intellectual society. The little daughter of an eminent statesman was looking out of a back window of their country-seat, when her eye fell upon the

donkey standing quietly in the yard, and wearing that indescribable expression, common to their race, which seems made up of conscious worth, dejection, and philosophical resignation. Her tender heart went out in pity for the sad creature, as she cried: "Poor Jacko, he is so lonesome! but papa will come home in a day or two, then he will be all right!"





THE CAMEL'S CLAIM.

“HUMOR? O yes! once—ages and ages ago—when we roved free and wild over the desert, we cultivated drollery, had heaps of it—humps-full. We carried it upon our backs, on our long jaunts over the desert waste. There are still waste places—long, dreary wastes—moral deserts, with sands as dry as any, where humor is needed, but since our race went out of the business, that sort of commerce has been given up. In fact, the commodity itself does not seem to be in so great demand as it once was; the supply appears to have given out in a great measure, and what there is now, seems to be rather the ‘tailings,’ if I may use that expression, of the abundant flow of former times. Yes, both supply and demand have dwindled, and the dry, unproductive sands of knowledge have drifted over many an oasis of sweet poetic verdure. I do not mean to disparage learning when I speak of its ‘unproductive sands.’ O dear, no! what does a poor beast of burden know about it? I merely want to say that it is unproductive of happiness, as we understand it, and it must be confessed that its dust does blind, or, at least, disqualify the eye for seeing the little simple pleasures that once gave great delight.”



W.H.B.

From the
Great
Desert

THE CAMELS' PLEA.



THE SEAL.

OUR seals, by their sarcastic invitation to come and share the cold comforts of their home with them, to study their habits, manners, etc., would seem to intimate that we can know little of their characteristics or mental qualities. We have, however, many opportunities of knowing some, if not of studying *all*, their traits of character, independent of a sojourn in their icy abode. Individuals are frequently captured and brought to us, and are among the most intelligent of all animals. Besides this, we are justified in concluding, from what their education brings out in their domestic state, that they are jolly fellows. A number of years ago a small seal with unusual attainments and natural gifts, was kept as an attractive feature of the varied exhibitions at the "Aquarium." His daily obligation was to exhibit to the admiring multitude his many accomplishments in the way of pistol shooting, etc. To be sure, he had not yet attained to any degree of proficiency in marksmanship above that of the unhurt duellist, or holiday sportsman, though he had mastered the preliminary of pulling the trigger without trepidation, which is more than I may say of the many above mentioned. Music, however, was his forte. Why, he could, with *one flipper*, play the hand-organ with as much delicacy and correctness as any ordinary professional! Of course, a seal of such drawing powers was a great favorite, and was allowed many privileges, and indulged in whims, which would have been frowned



THE SEALS AT HOME.

down in a less-gifted animal, to while away the tedium of his unemployed hours. At such times he occupied a large tank, made for his special use, in the centre of the great room. Around this tank was a wooden guard about three feet high, and broad enough on the top to form a convenient seat for those visitors in the vicinity, while some rare animal or monstrosity was being displayed about the enclosure. Occasionally some careless fellow would allow the skirts of his coat to fall over on the inside of this barrier, while he was intent upon the sights around him. This was the opportunity of our friend, the cultivated scal. He would glide noiselessly through the water to the spot, and there, without attracting attention, endeavor to reach the trailing garment. In two or three instances he succeeded in doing this, and pulled the astonished wearer into the water of the tank ; when he would dart about the basin in the greatest apparent glee, now and then stopping to raise his sleek head above the surface to look around, and, with those great human eyes, blink at the delighted audience, then down again to continue his gambols!





THE HIPPOPOTAMUS' REASON WHY.



THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

“OURS is probably the most ancient family of living quadrupeds ; I mean, of course, mammals ; about those reptiles I don't know any thing. They may have existed since the foundation, for aught I know. I can best explain our lack of the element you seek, by telling you briefly the traditions of the family. We only have so much of humor as comes into the composition of other qualities, such as playfulness, etc., but not the attribute pure and simple, I acknowledge frankly,—but that is no fault of our own. In the beginning, when the first representatives of our family found themselves a living reality, they foresaw the long line that would continue so far down the current of time, while hundreds of other races should spring up, flourish their allotted time, dwindle, and die out. They saw the necessity of a character strong enough to last them, and to assure our standing down to the remotest period of our stay upon earth. So, of course, with what foresight we had, we immediately set about providing ourselves with all possible qualities we could grasp, to be handed down. We first secured beauty of person, which may have suffered some by the lapse of ages, as beauty will. We forgot to include hair in our composition, so we were obliged to substitute for covering, a thick steel-gray rind, which gradually merges into a beautiful pink towards the underpart of the body ; that greatly enhances our beauty and, in fact, has been the princi-

pal factor in preserving it so long. In short, the first parents of our family took every thing they could lay their paws upon, for, you must remember, it was for their posterity they were acting, and their responsibility was great. Nevertheless, when the father of our race came to grasp humor, as a pleasing quality and one conducive of great happiness to its possessor, the powers having the matter in charge said he was a great pig, and denied him that much-coveted attribute. Our position, however, was then and there well established. Representatives of our race are to be found in every walk of life, and in abundant numbers."





THE TORTOISE HAS HIS SAY.

“ I DON'T know, I'm sure ! I don't think I understand what the thing is. If, however, it's an animal trait, I suppose we have it somewhere way down in the depths of our nature, all secure, probably for future use. But many a shell will have to be lifted by the slow process of time, before we arrive at any of those finer traits of character. You see we are pretty well back in the line of development, and are only now enjoying its lower attributes. But some day, I am assured, we shall come to the full use of all the higher qualities of the mind that any creature possesses, or that belongs to animal nature.

“ But if by humor you mean jokes and that sort of thing, there is not as yet any of that element in the compound of our nature. Still we are often made the medium, or means, of the foolishness being perpetuated. We are not yet fleet of foot, and if, during our peregrinations, a wanton boy catches sight of us, we are at his mercy, except so far as the shell that covers us affords protection. I must say for their credit, however, that boys do not often show any desire to do us bodily harm, farther than a little disfigurement. It has grown to be a custom, handed down for generations, among boys, to carve upon the back of a turtle a date a hundred years old or more, adding George Washington's initials to the inscription. This done, we are left to continue our walk without farther molestation, and with the respect added due to age and dignity. It matters







THAT BOY !

nothing to the boy that we may have been hatched no more than a year or two before, nor does this fact seem of much consequence to the discoverer, who is sure to come next upon our tracks the next season. He picks us up carefully, studies our backs, turns us over, makes a minute inspection from every point of view, and reverently puts us down again, with permission to move on at our will. Then he goes his way to write an accurate account of the find to that enterprising journal *The Promulgator*. He tells how the observing Wiseman, ever on the alert for any key to nature's mysteries, was walking in the fields when he saw what at first seemed to be a moving clod of earth or mossy stone. "On approaching the strange object, he found it to be a very old turtle, slowly plodding on, with joints stiffened by age, and shell jagged and scored by the rough usage of more than a hundred years, as evidenced by the date, half obliterated, of 1775, still faintly legible, and by some indistinct patriotic motto or sentiment, in which the word country is just discernible [this is, of course, the Wiseman's fancy]. And it is signed with the honored initials of G. W., still as distinct as if engraven upon the heart of patriotic America."

In a column, devoted to strange facts and remarkable incidents, of *The Promulgator*, the above appeared, together with accounts of sea-serpents, reported by ship-captains who would scorn fabrications; of wild men clad with a thick coat of long dark hair, probably the result of long exposure; and of newly invented perpetual motions, with perhaps a flying-machine just being completed and constructed upon principles that cannot fail of success.

How much of his valuable time the father of his country must have given to the task of keeping this important date, 1775, fresh in the memory of coming generations, by carving it upon the backs of tortoises and sending it crawling down through succeeding ages!



THE ANTIQUARY.



Pause

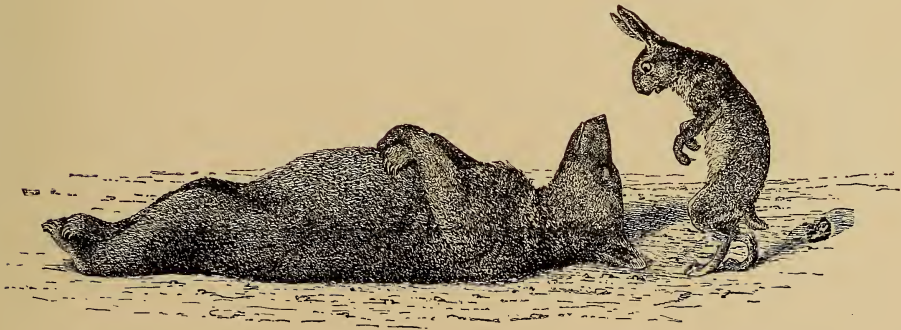
Pause!



Here must end my study of the humor of animals.

If in this little work I have used some fanciful arguments, on the other hand, I have presented only such facts as would furnish positive or reasonably presumptive evidence of the truth of my theory, that a sense of humor is largely, if not universally, possessed by brute creatures. Had my theme been almost any other attribute of animals, the field would have been vastly wider. But as the reader might expect something more amusing from the title than bare facts or logical conjecture would justify, I have endeavored to select such creatures as would afford the best opportunity for expression, character, and variety in illustration, and have allowed each one to speak for himself, as if in reply to direct inquiry, assisting his remarks with such illustrations as they suggested. I trust my work will be appreciated, at least by their descendants, when evolution has brought them on to an understanding of my efforts in their behalf.

The End.



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